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Crazy Quilt: Continuity, Identity and a Storied School Landscape in Transition–A Teacher's and a Principal's Works in Progress

BY

Pam Steeves ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

A 'story to live by', a term for identity, is described as the story that dwells in a person's heart, and is the story a person authors. How do a teacher and a principal continue to author their 'stories to live by' at a time of principal transition? I used a framework of the professional knowledge landscape of schools, attending to matters of time and place, to view the transition situation.

The research is a narrative inquiry re-presented as a metaphorical crazy quilt. The research puzzle emerged from my experiences of living in and adapting to an array of changing landscapes. I began by telling and then retelling my stories with insights from educational research, educational philosophy, philosophy, anthropology and theology. As 'batting' for the quilt I spent months both in relationship with the principal and, later, with the teacher in order that the quilt be a collaborative work. I then told stories of experience for a teacher and also lived with and told stories of experience for a principal over one and a half years. The story pieces I created were shared at a gathering around to construct the quilt.

I elaborated themes, and shared reflections in the final quilting, and handing on. I recognized attending and improvisation as the ways a teacher and a principal in a school continue their 'stories to live by'. I acknowledged the shaping qualities of the school landscape in allowing 'stories to live by' to be expressed. The complexity of this particular school landscape and the lives of a principal and teacher are revealed in the stories. The stories illuminate the power of narrative histories, multiple epistemologies and continually changing situations to shape the capacities of a teacher and a principal to continue their 'stories to live by'. The complexity of the school landscape leads to a re-imagination of school reform as unique works of improvisation, like a crazy quilt. The dissertation offers hope that we may move towards the bestowing of a gift of grace in education to let schools, the people who work in schools, and the children who attend schools, to continue to become.

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INTRODUCTION

Structure of the Dissertation

I chose to represent my work as a metaphorical crazy quilt. The crazy quilt is thought to be the easiest quilt to make, but in fact the idea of joining odds and ends, pieces of any shape or colour or texture to create a harmonious whole is easier to talk about than do. The quilts were made from whatever bits of fabric were at hand, from exotic to ordinary, giving it a somewhat crazy look. The quilt is multilayered with both aesthetic and utilitarian purposes. Fabric is pieced to both the backing cloth and the cotton batting which provides the warmth. The crazy quilt has no prescribed pattern. It is a unique creation. One of the reasons quilting flourished through the years, coming into popularity off and on, rests on the social aspect. Grace Barss, a quilter from Nova Scotia, says, "Invite a lot o' women – have the quilt in the frames, an quilt it. All quilting on the quilt. Then have a big supper – oh, it was lots of fun" (1980, p. 105).

As with a crazy quilt, my work is multilayered. In **Chapter One**, my stories, strengthened with expanded perspectives from the literature, provide the **backing** for the quilt. I explore continuity of a 'story to live by' through telling my stories of learning to live on changing landscapes. I use my own stories as text as I retell the stories with insight from responsive conversation around these stories and from literature drawn largely from educational research, educational philosophy, philosophy, anthropology and theology. As part of the retelling, I created titles for my stories using many of the professional knowledge landscape terms developed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995). It is from this embodied knowing that my research puzzle emerges. I end the chapter with questions which evolved for me as I wondered about continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and a principal at a time of principal transition to a school.

My quilter's **frame** to structure the work is represented in **Chapter Two**. I discuss the professional knowledge landscape of school which was the organizing framework for the study. In this second chapter I include educational research around succession of principals and insights I gained from early 1980s field work data of Bay St. School (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) at a time of principal transition at that school. I conclude that my study will create new understanding, because I will use knowledge of the narrative school landscape to frame my understanding of continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and principal at a time of principal transition to a school. In this chapter I give reasons for choosing narrative inquiry as the methodology for my study. I write of my need to choose a methodology which embodies relationship, temporality and movement, and which has the possibility of revealing 'stories to live by', those of my two participants, and my own. I write of my positioning as researcher as I live and tell the stories. It is through narrative inquiry that I construct my knowing and I describe procedures I used.

Chapter Three represents the **batting** for the quilt. Just as women around the quilting frame must be compatible (Otto, 1991), building trusting relationships was paramount in my narrative inquiry. It is the batting that gives the quilt its warmth and depth. Consequently the third chapter stories the negotiation of relationship with the principal and the evolving research topic within that relationship during the first year of the principal's arrival at the school, 1997-1998. The chapter ends with stories about negotiating entry into the school as a whole. Making myself known around the school, and amongst teachers, allowed me to slip into the storied school landscape, enabling an easier entry into relationship with the teacher.

The fourth through seventh chapters are the **story pieces** I created for the teacher's and principal's experiences during the second year of the principal's work at the school. The stories are portrayed chronologically to represent the flow of experience over time. I wanted to reveal a 'story to live by' for a teacher and principal and I wanted to reveal the extent they were able to express these 'stories to live by' on a particular school landscape at a particular time, a time of principal transition. The stories are of my two participants, however, I am intimately involved in the telling. The stories reflect what I attended to, what I selected, how I arranged and composed them. I attended and composed stories with an eye and ear to a 'story to live by' for the principal and teacher at the school. **Chapter Four** tells three stories of experience for the principal in the fall, 1998. **Chapter Five** tells three stories of experience for the teacher in the fall of 1998. **Chapter Six** tells three stories of experience for the teacher in the winter of 1999. **Chapter Seven** tells three stories of experience for the principal in the winter of 1999. These stories of experience represent the bits and pieces, the 'stuff of life' with which to create the crazy quilt.

In **Chapter Eight** I story the events of our three way get together in the late fall of 1999. I imagined our three way meeting as a **gathering around** a quilter's frame **to create the crazy quilt.** We worked in sight of each other as responses to the story pieces were shared. Responses to one story evoked responses to another as the story pieces were laid down. I present my participants' retelling of their responses to each others' stories and their experiences in the school as 'found poetry' (Butler-Kisber, 1998). It was at this time that an improvisatory story cloth installation was made from fabric fragments brought to the meeting by my two participants. A found poem entitled "Pinned Pieces" represents the conversation uttered as the story cloth 'quilt' was created. For my participants, the poem captures both what they know, their teacher knowledge, and who they are, their 'stories to live by' as educators. The chapter speaks to the unfolding of this event.

In **Chapter Nine**, I 'quilt' or **stitch the patterns** that I see in the stories. These are the understandings I elaborate as I look closely at the stories. The chapter is a narrative appreciation of continuity of a 'story to live by' for the teacher and for the principal, situated in and off a particular school landscape at a time of principal transition. Themes related to attending and improvising to continue to create 'stories to live by' are threaded through the stories along with an appreciation of the shaping effect of the narrative school landscape and narrative history in allowing ‘stories to live by’ to be expressed.

In **Chapter Ten, I hand on** my crazy quilt to others as a contribution to be shared in the field of curriculum research. I join an ongoing conversation with other researchers and offer affirmation and new insight on narrative inquiry, teacher knowledge and identity, and the complexities inherent in the school landscape. New wonders about school reform arise as I write about these themes. I conclude my chapter with a section on re-imagining schools in light of my narrative inquiry of continuity of a ‘story to live by’ for a principal and teacher at a time of principal transition.

CHAPTER 1: THE BACKING

Narrative Beginnings

Their story, yours, mine–it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take,
and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them.
-Coles (1989, p. 30)

I have lived on many different landscapes. I first experienced a change in landscape as I moved across this country and abroad as a child from a military family. My life was parceled out in intervals from one place to another. At the surface, it must have looked disjointed but I learned to live with changes and my story continued to evolve. In childhood, play with my sister allowed me to continue to make sense of the varying circumstances I found myself in.

As I grew from child to young woman, from classroom teacher to wife and mother, and from mother of a child with severe disabilities to special needs teacher and then to teacher-librarian in a school, I experienced changes once again, through my changes in position. But this time I was an adult. My confidence was shaken with some of these changes and I felt vulnerable, as I did as a newcomer when I was a child. For a while my life became disjointed until I learned once more how to live with these changes. As an adult I learned to improvise.

Later, as I lived in one place over time, I experienced the shifting qualities of the landscape as I was living on it. Broad social changes to the landscape were changing the experience I had of it. It was easier this time to recognize the changes and to begin to adapt to them in order to continue the story that I was creating. I left the school landscape to join a university landscape. On the surface, my story of being a teacher-librarian in a school had ended. But at a deeper level my commitment to inquiry and to voice continued. I began to see that continuity could look different depending on my perspective of it.

All the changes have shaped my own story. I see the layers; the continuity underlying all the changes at the surface. I see how my story has come to be. My own narrative history has shaped my inquiry topic and so I want to share with you these stories and my retelling. For as Clandinin and Connelly (1998) write,

> The promise of storytelling emerges when we move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and engage in conversations with our stories. The mere telling of a story leaves it as a fixed entity. It is in the inquiry, in our conversations with each other, with texts, with situations, with other stories that we can come to retelling our stories and reliving them. (p. 208)

Composing a Story to Live By

The story:

As a child I loved to play games of pretend with my sister. It was a way to survive as we hopped from province to province, and country to country, daughters, in a naval family. For us, school was a succession of bewildering experiences. It never made sense to me because I was always out of step with my situation. I entered grade five with a Shakespeare play under my belt and I had to cope with long division in pounds, shillings and pence. My schooling was a jumbled patchwork. Depending on the years, I might be ahead in English or two years behind in Math. Everything depended on where we moved next.

But security came in my stories of pretend with my sister. They gave me the opportunity to keep things open, to resist the scripted story that awaited me as I journeyed to new landscapes. I didn't want to be simply cast as a newcomer. The role of newcomer was so limiting to who I knew I was. There was much more beneath the surface. I refused to surrender to a role, to a fixed description. Instead I continued to create and recreate myself in the recreated worlds that I made with my sister.

In Bromley England my sister and I had a kind of fairy club rather like Brownies, which I had joined the year before in Canada. We played outside in our old-fashioned English garden filled with rosebeds, a pond, and cherub fountains. In Victoria, Canada we used to climb in the wild places, like the rocky hills bordering the Pacific Ocean close to our house. There we could grind seeds for flour, make primitive shelters between the crevices and tell time by the position of the sun. The open rocky places were most similar to the rural setting in Annapolis Royal on the East Coast of Canada that we had just left behind. When we moved to Ottawa, Canada, sports became the focus of much of our play together. I played hockey at our outdoor rink, my striped team scarf flying in the wind. At home we had *our own 'gang' to fit with other 'gangs' such as the professional, school, and community teams that filled my imagination and my days.*

A retelling:

As I moved from fairy tale to pioneer times to sporting life, I see that I was learning to order my haphazard life through our play. Our games of pretend became ways to live out and story the moral, intellectual and spiritual growth I was experiencing as my inner and outer landscapes meshed in the ways Lopez describes (1989). The landscapes meshed because both my inner imagination and my outer situation were being attended to through our relationship of play. I was living in and on both landscapes. I was experiencing a layered life story. The outer layer showed the outer situation story. It was discontinuous at the surface because of all the changes. The inner imaginary layer ran deep and continued from place to place, in our play. It was because we had each other that I could do this.

Imagination was the thread I came to count on. The educational philosopher John Dewey (1934) describes imagination as a "gateway" (p. 272). It was the gateway I could go through to link my experiences from the past to the present. And it was the gateway to encounter my sister. Play with my sister meant that my experiences as a child on different landscapes was educative. I was able to grow in my knowing through my life experiences. It was through play that I had the opportunity of fitting together the disjointed pieces I encountered in our myriad situations. The bits of experiences from past situations were able to interlock with pieces from the present because we could use our imaginations to connect them. A background was filling in, giving me the confidence to grasp at missing pieces that lay somewhere in the future. This linking, the ability to feel I was bringing something forward with me each time as I made my way, gave me a sense of continuity and hope that meant that I could go "blindly into the fog, with confidence" (Jevne, 1994, p. 153).

Through it all, I remember, my sister and I attended to each other. It was the close relationship that lit our imaginations, that made continuity possible. As long as I had my sister, I would not lose my way. Despite our ever changing circumstances, I recall how we remained "present to ourselves" (Greene, 1978, p. 17). It was our relationship that shielded us from storied plot lines of the newcomer on the landscape. So while my sister and I did not fit into various versions of school encountered on our outside changing landscapes, we were able to reposition ourselves through play from being storied as 'outsiders' to being more or less 'at home'. It was our play together that was giving me a place; a place for my own story.

I remember it was fun to move about. Lugones suggests that outsiders often practise a playful kind of "world traveling" (1987, p. 3). She writes that we do not need to be 'stuck' in any particular world; to passively await the chance to say our lines in someone else's play. I sense for her, all the world is not a stage. Instead she believes we should actively 'travel' to or create other worlds. Accordingly she believes it is our imagination that allows us to play and therefore travel. In Lugones' terms my sister and I were outsiders as we moved around, but we learned to shift from living one story to living a different one. We were getting lots of practice. We began making our stories up as we went along. We had adventures. We entered other worlds, using our imagination, in newly encountered landscapes, to continually reinvent ourselves, to author our own stories.

For Dewey (1938), experience, education and life are one and the same. The key to educational experience for Dewey is the principal of interaction and the principal of continuity. The two cannot be separated. I was learning this most powerfully through my experiences as a child, moving around on different landscapes in this country and abroad. Although our world was constantly changing and uncertain, my sister and I could grow together because we never lost sight of each other. My experiences were educative because I was able to make sense of them through playing stories with my sister. Our relationship provided the link, to give me a sense of continuity. The continuity of experiences that I created for myself through our play gave me hope and confidence to face the future. In this way, I became educated; I learned to be prepared.

The relationship that developed over time between myself and my sister, seems to correspond to what Noddings' (1992) describes as a caring relationship. She writes "A caring relation is a connection or encounter between two human beings–a carer and a recipient of care…both parties must contribute in significant ways" (p. 15). Playing together meant we were responding to each other. It was not a one-way relationship. Noddings does not see a caring relationship as a virtue or attribute. It is a relationship to nurture voice and growth.

Retelling my story of my relationship with my sister I now imagine that we were each creating a 'story to live by', a term for identity described by Connelly and Clandinin (1999). I see a 'story to live by' as a story that emerges from the continuity of experiences. I see my own story as the story that was born of relationship with my sister, the story that I author. It was our relationship that brought forth our imaginations to create bridges to our ever changing worlds. Our relationship and our imaginations appear to be in dialectical arrangement. One could ignite the other. This is what I learned from living my stories as a child and now telling them here. They speak profoundly to "what you know first" (MacLachlan, 1995, p. 1).

Continuing:

As a young mother, I remember how thrilled I was that an elementary school with a fine-arts emphasis was located near our neighborhood. I thought it would be ideal for Geoffrey, our first son. The philosophy of the school was to integrate the arts into children's learning, not to 'produce' budding artists but to enrich their learning. I used to call it extended childhood because, of course, it fit so well with the notions of imagination and play that I had as a child myself. I now saw that the story that made sense in my childhood was able to continue for our son.

But it was not so with our second son. The coherent story that I had made for myself was suddenly disrupted. My confidence was shaken and my 'story to live by' could not continue. It happened as Matthew, aged four, entered 'the education system'.

Disruption: Encountering a Sacred Story

The story:

> *Shortly after we moved to Edmonton, our son Matthew started kindergarten at a special school. He was four years old. We had come a long way, from Nova Scotia to Edmonton for this very purpose. We had heard that there were teams of teachers and therapists that would work together to help Matthew with the difficulties he had.*
>
> *Although this approach all seemed logical and sound, it was hard for me as a Mum to see our little boy, all dark curls and laughing eyes, whisked away daily in the arms of the Handibus driver, to be taken to school. Matthew couldn't say anything, he fell over easily, and he was still in diapers.*
>
> *As the year went on, my fears were calmed as I met with kindly therapists and teachers who had Matthew's best interests at heart. As June approached they started to talk to me about having Matthew move on to a 'Readiness' class. It seemed that Matthew wasn't getting much out of 'playing'. He seemed to be watching a lot. According to these professionals, he was not learning enough in this non-structured environment. They told a story in which it would be better to challenge Matthew with the beginnings of school subjects.*
>
> *I was not comfortable enough to say that I thought the 'playing' was fine for Matthew. I couldn't really back it up. But I thought he should be playing–that perhaps they could be playing with him.*

A retelling:

I was uneasy in my acquiescence to their decision. I was afraid Matthew would lose something. But they were 'the professionals' and I was 'just the mother'. Now I see there was a theory of knowledge in place on this landscape that separated me from other people who lived on the landscape with me. It was the theory that has dominated our western world in the twentieth century. We have learned to look to professionals to solve our problems. As a mother I had practical knowledge but the schools and society put power in the hands of the professional because of their specialized, scientific, bounded and standardized knowledge (Schon, 1983). My knowledge, in contrast, was uncertain, untested, unscientific. It was tacit, only a hunch. The cards were stacked against me. I was beginning to feel "in-valid" (Jevne, 1994).

What I now see as I retell this story was that I was treading carefully, because I had encountered uneven ground. This landscape had been shaped by a story. Professionals had expert knowledge (Schon, 1983) which separated them by positioning them differently on the landscape. Schon writes that the professional in the 20th century has been granted extraordinary privilege and position in dealing with human matters. Privilege and position has been justified by a notion that human problems can be resolved through the rigorous application of scientific theory and technical expertise. Those that acquire the systematic knowledge base and technical expertise are separated from those that do not. Parents are separated from teaching professionals.

Because Matthew was placed in this landscape, I had to go there and face it. I was coming up against the theory-driven practice story, a story named a sacred one by Clandinin and Connelly (1995). Crites (1971) equates a sacred story with a creation story because the story itself, although unutterable, "creates a world of consciousness and the self that is oriented to it" (p. 296). Both the world and the self in the world go unquestioned. The sacred story composes the lens through which we view.

While I felt uneasy about having Matthew attend a readiness class, I also felt vulnerable to the story which seemed to have the qualities of a sacred story, a story of 'professionals know best'. This story created the world I was living in. Because I did not have the confidence to move outside the story, to create a different one as I had done with my sister as a child, I at first surrendered to the part I was to live in this story. It seemed that it was the only way to deal with 'the problem'. I reflect now on how I learned to live in this new world, this encountered landscape.

Continuing:

Over the next several years, advice, admonishments, poured in. But I would not give myself over to living out this story of 'how to cope with a child with disabilities.' I would not follow the plot line for Matthew or myself as mother. I started to pay attention once again to what I knew best, imagination and relationship. I began to pay attention to Matthew.

Composing a Counter Story

The story:

> *It is easy to picture Tony in my mind...shining black glass eyes, stiff plastic whiskers, striped tabby fur of black and brown, blurred by repeated wash and wears. Tony was a rather pudgy soft toy cat. This was on the outside. But Matthew made Tony real. Like the* Velveteen Rabbit *(Williams, 1922) in the picture book Tony was loved dearly. Tony was taken everywhere by Matthew–for visits, for car rides, for long trips across Canada by plane. And he took him to school. Tony was a source of conversation. "I like your cat, Matthew"," What does Tony like to eat?", "Does Tony sit on your bed at night?" Tony was always performing tricks for us and doing things we were amazed at. Tony was a member of the family and a significant part of Matthew's life.*
>
> *But Matthew was eleven years old. He was beginning to attend a large secondary school. There would be lots of extra help for Matthew, for his special needs, especially for his communication needs. There were stirrings, however, as the year went on. I noticed it with some of Matthew's teachers. There were questions...about the stuffed cat. "Perhaps we should call his Mother?" "Shouldn't we be encouraging 'age appropriate' behavior?" "Isn't this part of our job?"*
>
> *I got the call. I was to meet with the principal of this large secondary school. It must be important. I was not sure what the meeting was to be about but I had my ideas. After a few pleasantries the 'issue' of Tony the cat came up. I must admit that viewed from the outside, it seemed pretty crazy to defend this cat. But I was looking from a different vantage point. I was attending to what Tony meant to Matthew from the inside. Tony helped Matthew be strong. Tony was always there. Tony was funny and could do things that would make other people laugh and then Matthew could join in too. Matthew wanted more than anything to belong, to have a place. Tony helped him do that.*

> *The principal, a caring man, who was himself seen by others as probably a bit unusual, felt comfortable enough to be persuaded by my arguments. Tony survived and so did Matthew.*

A retelling:

My story becomes richer as I read the words of Bateson (1994), an anthropologist. She writes from her experiences of living in many foreign cultures. She suggests that when we do not know the rules or when we encounter a situation with which we are not familiar, we do not need to withdraw, waiting until we have 'learned' before participation. Instead, we need to learn to improvise, to be willing to play with partial understanding, to learn along the way. Matthew made sense of this new landscape because he was able to bring Tony, something familiar to him. In this way he was prepared to participate through play. There was no telling where this might lead but he would be able to join in. I too was joining in. The felt support of my chosen community made me feel confident to bring my own knowing, my own 'story to live by' forward. If Matthew was to continue at this school he would need to bring his cat. It was an improvisation to allow both our stories to continue.

I see now, as I attended to Matthew, and in the company of my husband David and son Geoffrey that I learned to resist, to create a counter story. According to Nelson (1995), when someone is unwilling to be heard in the larger community, a smaller chosen community can be formed which opens a space for relationship and dialogue and the possibility of a different story. It was this kind of community that I formed with a few chosen people. The situation created gives rise to opportunities to be really listened to, to develop individual self worth and 'voice' as understood in the work of Belenky et al. (1986).

A counter story developed in this supportive place, strength was gathered and the heartfelt whisper was heard aloud. Initially, as Matthew entered the school system, I walked alone on new ground and the dominant story of professional expert pressed me in a prescribed direction. As I learned to walk in the company of my chosen community, I began to create a different story. I could begin to imagine, once again, different ways of being in the world. In Nelson's (1995) sense, and in mine, there was now the possibility of re-entry to the larger group, to voice with confidence, a new story. I had chosen. Several years later I was acting much differently.

I now see these personal stories nested within a larger educational framework. As well as being a mother, I am also a teacher. The way I teach is powerfully influenced by my personal narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). My own story continued to evolve in response to the landscapes that were shaping me.

Wearing Smooth: Living a Secret Story

The story:

> *I needed to work part-time in order to attend to Matthew. However, as it turned out, I really felt I flourished in this situation. I had time to think...to use my imagination. This was important because I was working as a resource teacher with children who were having difficulty 'fitting in'. Language was a big concern. I wanted to create situations for them...to hear their voices. We were not playing an established story of school. We were creating our own story like me and my sister as children. In our story children always came first and the subject matter, teaching and milieu followed (Schwab in Connelly and Clandinin,1988). Our milieu involved imagination and caring relationships. The interior of my resource room displayed my commitment to these ideas. I had a puppet theatre with paper puppets made by the children to act out stories that we read. There were paints, clay, props and mementos of all kinds. The shelves were filled with literature and exciting information books. My knowing that teaching is a relational act was embodied in the cozy couch that we could all fit on together when we did our shared reading. Our subject matter included poetry, illustrations and children's published writing. It all seemed like a kind of secret hideaway. Our kindergarten teacher complimented me once by saying there must be a bit of magic going on. But I also got other comments, for example, from another staff member who said "Are they having a party in there?"*

A retelling:

My resource room embodied my own knowing (Johnson, 1989). Johnson's theory of imagination proposes a continuum–the idea of the body in the mind. He says "to know is to understand in a certain manner" (p. 206). Personal experiences are never left out of the knowing we construct. It is how we view the world. Polyani (1969) says we 'attend from' this view. It may be tacit, just below the surface. He writes that we may know more than we can tell. These ideas help me explain my practices in my resource room classroom.

I see now that I wanted to connect with these children who had not been able to participate in the prescribed story of school. Delpit (1995) tells of scripted stories awaiting children who are considered different. These stories script children as underachievers, as being 'high risk', as 'behavior disordered' for example. But I wanted to get to know these children more fully and to allow them the opportunity to explore other worlds. I found that sharing experiences from home brings life and understanding to experiences at school. When stories from home are welcomed, the opportunity to make sense of school is enhanced. Then continuity is strengthened helping both children and teachers navigate their ever changing situation.

Now, as I reflect back on these years, using the professional knowledge landscape metaphor (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), I see this 'in classroom place' as a place of secret stories. I was able to live stories of practice that made sense to me in the safety of my classroom. I was relatively free from scrutiny. Things went well for me in this setting but, after a while, I began to feel uneasy at the sameness. I was not talking about what I was doing so it seemed my knowing did not grow. There was little interchange among other teachers and myself. Being part-time I didn't feel I belonged. I only knew what made sense to me from my experiences so far. But that's where it ended. Over the years, I learned to expect change. I learned to live with it. Now I had an opportunity to attend graduate school. I welcomed it. I would have the chance to talk and write about what mattered to me and hear what others had to say. I wanted to learn more.

Re-awakening: Out in the Open

As I moved to the university landscape I re-awakened to stories of possibility (Greene, 1988). My focus had become hazy, hazy about what I was doing and why. Now through conversation, writing, reading, and reflection I could see things sharply once again. I began to explore my own biography, to be grounded in the life story I had been evolving.

Dewey's (1938) views relating education to life are the foundation of Connelly and Clandinin's (1994) view that teacher education is a lifelong endeavor, that it involves life history, that it is an educative relationship amongst people, and that it is a continuum (p. 147). In proposing a way to grow educationally, they expand Dewey's metaphor of education as the reconstruction of experience to teacher education as reconstruction. Central to this is the idea of living life as a story. "Thinking of life as a story is a powerful way to imagine who we are, where we have been, and where we are going" (p. 149).

Butt and Grigg (1995) found that in probing teachers' professional knowledge, childhood experiences figured most prominently. It made sense as autobiographical narratives could serve as texts from which to draw out potential theories for dialogue and discussion. It was a different theory of knowledge because there was an implication that it was practice, embodied in teacher's stories, that might lead to theory. I began playing again, this time with ideas.

My play lead me to educators who talked of storied knowledge. Schubert (1991) suggests that, through telling their stories, teachers are able to make sense of theory in their practice. Citing Dewey (1916), he says that praxis is the embodiment of theory and practice in action, the living of the story. Praxis is reflected on and given voice through story, making a place for teacher's knowledge.

As I pursued studies and devised research on something that mattered to me–personal voice–I was discovering my own. My understanding of personal voice, developed through my master's work (Steeves, 1993), was as a metaphor for imagination, including moral imagination. It was an exploration of how young children might place themselves in their own learning situation through viewing children engaged in a library research project. If children were given sufficient opportunity to connect to their inquiry in a variety of ways–through literature, art, memoirs, conversation and hands-on experience, they developed a relationship with the work, they were committed and their knowing became embodied. It was learning that resided with the child. The research project work I did with young children as a teacher-librarian was a way to actualize my knowing. It was hopeful to be working with the children in this way.

However, school landscapes in my province were changing. Exploration, imagination and reflection were being squeezed out. The landscape was rife with policy-driven initiatives pressing down through the conduit. 'What counts' was on everyone's mind. It was becoming harder and harder to survive as a teacher-librarian in this environment. We were becoming an endangered species (Letain, personal communication, July 27, 1998).

But I had a close and trusting relationship with my principal and a few teachers. Our sense of purpose and the trust we shared acted as a kind of shield as we faced government cutbacks. We talked in secret places mostly, but it was the sustained conversation that Connelly and Clandinin (1994) talk about as teacher education. The conversation was widening as research project work and the time for discussion around it became a part of the school plan.

Eventually however, with budgets tight, the most vulnerable people on the school landscape had to leave. The 'close community' started to break up. The tone began to change. Van Manen (1986) describes tone as a kind of atmosphere that pervades our place of experience and living. There is a sense of presence or non presence of relationship. The shifting tone, along with provincial and district achievement testing, and 'results oriented' teaching was changing the landscape of school. It was changing the way we were teaching and the way the children were learning and there was no place to talk about it, to figure out what to do.

Abandonment: Developing a Cover Story

The story:

> *It was nearing the end of the year and Bob, a teacher colleague, and I still hadn't worked together on a research project. We decided on Ancient Greece since that was a curricular topic and it interested both of us. Many of the students in the class had been 'in trouble' it seemed for most of the year. It had been difficult for all staff concerned. "They just don't seem to care about anything" was a typical refrain. The teacher felt he was wearing out. I was glad to be able to work with him on this project. I would be able to help out. I took on a lot of the planning. We started with Greek salad and ended with Baklava. Sandwiched between was our work together. I had been exploring the Greek myths with the students in the library. The Cyclops, Minotaur, Medusa and Theseus, the hero, conjured up a relish for high drama. The students would often break out in spontaneous clapping at the end of a story, for instance, a fall from grace was applauded as they showed their approval when sufficient humility was not displayed by mortals.*
>
> *It was not hard getting 'into' the topic. The problem was getting out. The students became very involved. Even those who "hadn't done anything all year" were shaping bits of clay with awkward fingers and maneuvering cardboard cutouts to structure people, diorama style, to depict a typical house of Ancient Athens. What sparked their interest most were the details about the slaves. They were absorbed. As I read a story of a "typical day", I could have heard a pin drop.*
>
> *Many students began to ask questions. They wondered as they wrote their reflections about the slaves in the coppermines and those in the households. They wondered what it would be like to be a slave. I thought to myself, that I could spend the rest of the year on this topic.*
>
> *But time was up. A battery of achievement testing would be coming up in a couple of months and Bob said he needed to get them ready. It felt like abandonment. I wondered if those students would ever, in their lives, ask these questions again. Or had we lost it–back to apathy and silence.*

A retelling:

The students formed a relationship to the topic. Their imaginations became ignited. Greene (1988) writes of the need to set up situations in schools that lead to questioning. Children must be engaged. She writes about the need to provoke children to examine "the taken for granted", to re-imagine the givens. The students were provoked to ask questions about slaves. According to Greene, it is the ability, the permission, to imagine how things could be different that leads to freedom. How ironic this is as I retell my story.

Time to play with ideas, time to listen to each other's voices to get differing perspectives in order to broaden our horizons (Greene, 1988), was being pushed aside. To survive on the landscape I started lowering my voice. It was becoming unsafe to talk openly about what I believed in as a teacher. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) found that on the school landscape there often are no places safe enough for teachers to tell their teaching stories except, perhaps, in social gatherings off the landscape of school or in the privacy of the classroom after the bell has rung.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe teacher knowledge as situated within a school landscape. The professional knowledge landscape of school shapes and is shaped by the interaction of people, events and things of which it is constituted. The landscape is educative when it accommodates three essential human desires–the desire to tell stories, the desire to reflect and think again and the desire for relationship. Often situations encountered in schools seem to shut down the conversation. It was my experience, especially in the 'out of classroom' places at the school. At staff meetings for example, talk often proceeded in one way. Policies were outlined. Procedures were described. The back and forth response and tone of conversation was seldom heard. The tendency was to look at the clock rather than to each other.

I told secret stories privately to friends but in public I was silent or told an acceptable cover story (Crites, 1974; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The public places at school are the 'out of classroom places' such as meeting rooms, school offices, and staff rooms where teacher's stories give way to prescribed stories of how school ought to be. These prescriptions are referred to as the "rhetoric of conclusions" (Schwab, 1962 in

Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). They describe what is 'best' in terms of teaching practices and procedures. They are derived from theories and practice but they often don't make sense to teachers because they are stripped of their context. They are the product of deliberation off the school landscape. They are funneled into schools via the conduit to enact. The 'rhetoric of conclusions' is fixed and final. There is no space for wonder and conversation. The underlying assumption is that teaching is a technique, not to be tampered with by inquiry. As in my story of the grade six class, personal questions are abandoned. Children and teachers are to follow dutifully. In the 'out of classroom places' teachers are compelled to react by telling acceptable stories of expertise or stories to acknowledge things are going well–as they have been prescribed.

Because I worked in an 'out of classroom place', the library, I could not 'hide'. I told a story of increased achievement through participation in research project work. It was not that I could not see benefits, it was just that there was so much more involved in working with students and teachers in this way. I could only tell part of the story. I was not talking about voice. Without the trusting community, exposed on the 'out of classroom place', I was not safe to talk about the story I believed in. I told a cover story.

The theologian, Crites (1974), helps me understand the situation more fully. He describes the telling of a cover story as an act of self deception. It implies that the real story is suppressed for some reason and that a respectable story is substituted for it. The real story dwells in a person's heart. It is the one that is attended to and is responsible for directing the person's action. However, the rationale for the action can be told as a cover story that fits the need for acceptability in the given circumstance.

Crites suggests that it is difficult to lead a life where we do not tell some cover stories. He writes that we must learn to live with them. To do this he found that contemplative disciplines, devout, aesthetic and dialectical, helped him reflect on and learn from his experiences. It is only in reflection and thinking again about my story that I awakened to what I was doing.

It was becoming more and more difficult for me to enact my 'story to live by'. For me, and for my students, experiences were becoming less educative. I thought about my story as grounded in Dewey's (1938) theory of experience. He writes that experience may be educative or miseducative. The difference is one of quality; the quality of the interaction and the quality of continuity. He makes it clear that he is not talking about having a plethora of experiences leading naturally to education. It is not what but how this happens which is all important. Situations that give people the opportunity to make connections in their life are deemed to be worthy because there is the opportunity for continuity. I began to see that the experiences for teachers and students on a school landscape can be 'more' or 'less' educative.

Making My Way: Stories of Hope

Continuing:

I am now off the school landscape at the university where the tone for re-search is felt in the conversations, the writings, the readings, the encouragement of others. The Center for Research for Teacher Education and Development has become, for me, a landscape for a responsive community of the kind that Dewey (1938) speaks of. Since education is a social process, Dewey believes that the quality of the interaction will be realized to the degree that the people involved form a community. But for a community to sustain itself and grow, it must be able to examine and re-examine its own ideas so that they do not become fixed in dogma. Self renewal through sustained conversation can keep the community alive.

Dewey offers a way to think about control in social situations which speaks to interaction which is humane and democratic. He says, "It is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group" (p. 54). Dewey is not talking about unbridled freedom which must be checked and kept in order, but rather a freedom that responds to those who are participating in a common activity.

The lines of communication are kept open instead of being blocked. People and their concerns are attended to.

The philosopher and theologian, Martin Buber (1947), echoes these sentiments. Genuine responsibility occurs only when there is response, and so there is a need to always be in felt relationship with the other. He argues that the heart of education is the inclusive community that comes about through dialogical relation. Although this relation often presents itself in conversation, it is not constituted as such. It can be present in silence, and in the felt presence of those who are separated from each other. However, there must be the experience of inclusion of the other. They are held 'in trust'. He goes on to say that genuine community 'binds' rather than 'bundles' people together. Comparing the collective to a community he writes that in a collective people are marching side by side whereas in a community they turn to face each other. He says, "the collective demands the staking of the self, the heart of the world" in doing this "it marches forward into the abyss" (p. 51).

Relationship has figured prominently in my life and so it seemed natural for me to hope to do a narrative inquiry as a way to continue to explore and grow. Narrative inquiry is built upon the premise that "to study education is to study experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 415). They say that stories are the closest we can come to experience. I was already learning to tell and retell my stories in responsive relationships. I was learning how important it was tell my story and get response. Response affirmed who I was becoming. I began to see how I needed response in order for my own 'story to live by' to continue.

Narrative inquiry is a kind of research grounded in relationship. The research, in which I am engaged, started on a university landscape. It began in development of a relationship with a fellow student, Jeanette. Through sharing stories in a curriculum class we were able to travel to each other's worlds (Lugones, 1987). My stories of experience were received in this setting. Telling, listening, and responding to stories of experience broadened my horizons. It was a relationship to nurture voice. Belenky et. al. (1986) write that in order for personal knowing and the knowing of others to become connected there must be the kind of interaction where people really listen and care about each other. In this situation there is a merging of the tributaries, of different streams of thought. Women develop an emerging voice, a voice with power. "Once a woman has a voice, she wants to be heard" (p. 146). I was being listened to, as someone who knew something about teaching. I was listening to Jeanette. It led us to imagining worlds together.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) write of the importance to pre-service and inservice teachers of learning through telling and writing their own biographical histories since they will be enacted in their practices. The biographical history becomes part of teachers' personal practical knowledge. "Personal practical knowledge is a moral, affective, and aesthetic way of knowing life's educational situations" (p. 59). In sharing my stories, I was becoming more attentive to what I was doing and why.

As I shared my stories of experience Jeanette would ask me questions or ask me to tell her more. Sometimes my story would trigger a memory for her. Following this I would often see my story in a new way. It would lead me to retell my story with a broader view. I began to see the threads that were weaving through many of them. Connecting things that mattered in the past with retellings in the present was creating unity for me. It was beginning to propel me forward. I was beginning to feel a rhythm and flow (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). We both were.

But the time was short lived…for one of us. As in my story of the students studying Ancient Greece, time was up. Time to wonder and question during a year of sabbatical university study was drawing to a close for her. Another landscape loomed on the horizon, a school waiting for the arrival of a new principal. Through my stories of experience I learned there was a difference between living on landscapes created by others, and living in landscapes created by a community that I was a part of. I began to wonder…what would happen? What would the landscape of this school be like? How might it change on her arrival as new principal? How might the landscape change her ? We both wondered. The research story begins here. It is a story with two voices.

My Story

I have an image. I am cupping my hands together tenderly. It's as if I want to bend down and drink water from a stream. But there is something precious in my hands. It is both delicate and fleeting. What is it? Maybe Jeanette would know. She would understand at least. Jeanette and I have become friends. She likes to wonder about things that matter and so do I. We like sharing the literature for children but we think it's for adults too. We like to play with ideas that are conjured by touchstones worn smooth by rivers. And we like to listen to each other's stories.

Our friendship developed in a curriculum class where we were learning to make sense of our own curriculum through the telling of significant (Carr, 1986) stories from our pasts. We participated in story groups where we could respond to each other's stories. We were giving each other insights, new possibilities for telling. We were learning that there are many ways to see and many corresponding ways to tell. Spaces opened for multiplicity. Bateson (1994) suggests that it is retelling that enables a kind of learning from experience. We were making connections between recognizable patterns, spiraling through memories, weaving a tapestry that was our life so far. In our story group we were also developing a caring community, the kind that is necessary for narrative inquiry to occur. It happens within relationships of trust and respect (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

When the class was over we continued to meet. It seemed that there was never a loss for words. They became the objects of our fascination. We would march down to the library together and try our hand at ERIC on the computer terminal and then return to books of etymology tucked away at the bottom of shelves in the reference area. It was fun. We were exploring. We cherished the time we spent together.

Time is necessary for trust to develop in a relationship. As we continued to meet I wondered where this might lead. I didn't need a clear picture. It seemed good enough that we seemed to be going somewhere together. What I was sensing was that participation holds the key to new learning (Bateson, 1994). I thought about new beginnings.

As the warm days of summer beckoned and holiday time with our families drew near, there seemed to be some urgency to keep our conversations going. It was with a great sense of excitement and anticipation that I responded to her invitation to do 'a project' in her school. She was being assigned as principal to a new school in the fall. It is *always difficult to start anew. We thought about transitions. I would certainly "be there" to help in any way I could...*

Her Story

...Connections and people are essential to the reflecting and imagining that I do. I'm thinking about next year; a new school, new people, a new place, but how might I know who I am in this new place, for I am not new. I have struggled here at the University trying to understand who I am and whether there is any significance to the journey that I am on. As time helped me to dance and discover the threads to wind and entwine I explored a new routine and rhythm to the knowing that I have. This beat is one I am becoming familiar with as I journey on, yet it will change again. What are the threads, the images, the patterns that I want to continue with in my new place? How can I sustain the newly awakening awareness of this fragile other rhythm; the one just becoming a counterpoint to the ways in which I understand my world? There are people who have helped me to recognize this pattern. Will they help me to strengthen and create another layer in this place? I'm scared. I'm reluctant to leave yet I know that I'm unable to stay. Glimmers of hope are important now. The touchstone in my hand absorbing warmth and radiating significance. The weight of the stone becoming noticeable, a moment that matters.

Pam is sharing a picture that has come to her about hands and I smile for I too have an image of gentle soft hands holding a glimmer, a moment, a thought , as though it was catching the light and time was stopping just for a heartbeat before it gracefully finds it's own place in the morning's sunrise. Continuity. Pam and I have shared many conversations that have sparkled my imagination and these dancing ideas helped me to know that which I needed to understand and to write about. Perhaps Pam and I could see ourselves together in some ways, continuing our knowing. There will be a place to think about spirit stones, stories, hands and sunrises in my new place if I listen to the rhythm of this newer cadence. There is a connection between schools and work with schools, and work with people in the schools. There is work thinking about the significance of the unfolding of these stories. Pam and I together will attend to the rhythm.

Janis is a kindred spirit who will help me to understand and to thread my new experiences together with who I am so that I can create a world for children that helps them become successful in their own worlds of understanding. Janis has listened with me and will help me to hear that which I understand so that my own journey is filled with hope. Continuity and transition–if there are people and connections that build and fade and extend and live becoming the essence of a new context then I will be able to *feel the weight and warmth of the stone in my hand. I will attend to those things that are important from newly awakened moments.*

Jean will continue to be there, her faith, her insights, her remarkable courage to hear the most delicate sounds as notes of significance. We will create a reason to continue because the children need us to understand that which is essential to the lives and stories that people live and then choose to tell.

There is another way to imagine the place that I will be going to...it is a beginning...it is another place along the way to listen to the sounds, to create the dance and to always strengthen, strengthen, the company who choose to be together. The way that I will begin to make sense of my time at university and my place at school will be with the people who I am lucky to have journey with me.

A Research Puzzle Emerges

There will be no abandonment this time. But I wonder. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) say that a school landscape is always shifting. Political events off the landscape of school will have dramatic resonance with policy initiatives that filter down the conduit. People arrive and depart, leaving the landscape changed in their midst. Ideas and theories come and go impacting the landscape for more or less periods of time. In this way a principal coming to a school could be one of the 'shape shifters'.

A principal's identity might make a difference. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe various scenarios generated from their research program. A principal may come to a school hoping to 'leave their mark', to deposit their own story of school. A principal might be cast in the rebel image. For this image the principal 'goes it alone' against the system. The principal might be cast as having no identity except as the one who delivers current policy and theoretical mandates decided off the landscape of the school. Following Dewey (1938), I wonder if a principal might come to join with teachers at the school to create a story of school together–a story that moves, invigorated by the voices of many, leading to continuous self renewal and growth. This is what Jeanette was imagining. She imagined herself as the teller of these stories. This was her story of herself as principal–the identity she authored for herself.

But how might the landscape of school shape a principal? Being a new principal is a transition for the principal as well as for the people at the school. What happens depends on the stories on the landscape. Reflecting on the significance of my own stories of living with transition made me wonder about Jeanette. Always, relationship had played such a key part in my continuing ability to grow and express my own identity, my own 'story to live by'. But Jeanette would not be known when she arrives. It made me wonder. It made me want to attend to Jeanette. *Would the 'storytelling' principal continue to have stories to tell on this new landscape? Would she be able to continue her 'own story to live by'?*

The question brings me back to Dewey (1934). In order to encourage a continuing sense of self, responsive interaction is needed. Communication is not announcing things. He writes:

> Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what has been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters, as well as to that of those who listen. (p. 244)

My own stories show me that it was my participation in a responsive community, even if there were only two, as with me and my sister that provided the 'condition' to strengthen and continue my developing story. _I_ was attended to. It was what I wanted for my son. I wanted him, not a scripted story, to be attended to. It was what I wanted to do for the children whom I taught. Bateson (1994) writes that attending means being present to the person or the situation. She is talking about "building and sustaining the settings in which individuals can grow and unfold not be 'kept in their place', but empowered to become all that they can be" (1989, p. 56). It is the kind of attending I have experienced in my stories of transition. It is close-up. It requires attending to the person's life, to build confidence, to help build for them a 'story to live by'. It made all the difference to me as I encountered changes to the landscape. It might make all the difference to Jeanette. *But on a school landscape, with its separate in and out of classroom places (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), how does a responsive community come together to encourage a principal's 'story to live by to develop'? What about communication in the 'out of classroom place', the place where a principal lives in a school? What about participation?*

More wonders:

Bateson (1994) writes that attending deeply and broadly to a situation will increase the likelihood of seeing something recognizable. There may be lots of surface changes, lots of things to distract our attention especially today in our fast paced world. It can lead to feelings of being disconnected with nothing making sense. *Having experienced many school landscapes where always there seemed to be so much going on, how might distraction play a part, especially if Jeanette is new?*

Bateson (1994) says that improvisation is the vehicle for participation in an uncertain world. It is playing without knowing all of the rules, like joining in a new dance without knowing all the steps, or fiddling with a program on the computer without formerly digesting the 'how to' book first. It fits with my stories of living on changing landscapes. For Bateson, education does not precede participation. Education is participation. Life seems to flow. She says that people confronting change are never fully prepared but "they are strengthened to meet uncertainty if they can claim a history of improvisation and habit of reflection" (p. 6). On a school landscape, the 'out of classroom place', where a principal dwells, is a formal place filled with certainty. Policies, procedures, and theories generally go unquestioned in this place (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Typically, it is not a safe enough place for play and improvisation. *What will this mean for Jeanette's ability to continue her 'story to live by' in her new place?*

Bateson says that we compose our lives (1989). She says that on the surface a life story may look haphazard. It may look discontinuous. But a continuing sense of self welcomes new experiences with resiliency and creativity. The deep continuity of a 'story to live by' provides the confidence to tackle changes on the surface. Interrupting pathways on the surface mean we may "zig zag from stage to stage without a long term plan" (p. 82). She found this to be a common feature when she examined the lives of women combining commitments to both family and career. This is how my life story probably looks. However, I see how I for the most part have been doing the composing. The story that I author, my 'story to live by' has continued through the many changes. But schools are institutions "ruled by the clock on a daily basis and by promotion on an annual basis" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 160). *How much space is there to zig zag here I wonder?*

Hoffman (1989) echoes some of these same ideas. She writes of her experiences immigrating from Poland to North America. Hoffman writes that composing a story on a newly encountered landscape is challenging because in moving you may physically lose connection with the past. She worries about the erasure of imagination, making it difficult to conceive a future. She tries to overcome her newness as a foreigner but she does not want to lose herself. She senses the need to 'triangulate to something…the past, the future, another place, to anchor or we are subsumed, creatures of fashion" (p. 276). She begins to recall her childhood stories in the face of this. She speaks of the power of childhood stories, easily remembered because they come from a time of innocence when "We are not yet divided" (p. 74). The stories are close-up, intimate and unguarded. They provide the weight to anchor her and the grounding to go forward to participate in her new life; to author a new story. *Will Jeanette be able to bring her story forward in this new place?*

The philosopher, Michael Polanyi's (1969) ideas also strike me as a way to live with constant change. He argued that the most likely way to solve a puzzle was to have all members of the community work together. This does not sound unusual, but he was not talking about splitting up the work to serve a common goal, like on an assembly line.

He was talking about doing work 'in sight' of others so that each knew what the other was doing. This way the person most able to contribute in each successive situation would be available to help. To me this speaks to attending to each other. As circumstances change as they inevitably will, people are well situated to respond. Yet on a school landscape Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe the in and out of classroom places that teachers and a principal inhabit as two distinct places that separate teachers and a principal from each other. *How might this idea come into play if a community needs to work in sight of each other in order to be more responsive to continual change?*

I will try to get to the complexities of the situation. My intention is to attend not only to the surface of what is going on but to the depth–the texture and the layers. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) say schools are storied landscapes. They say there are differences in the stories told within the 'in classroom place' and 'out of classroom' place of school. As principal, Jeanette would reside for the most part in the 'out of classroom place'. *What stories might be told from a mostly 'in classroom place' of a teacher upon Jeanette's arrival? What difference might Jeanette's arrival make for a teacher, one who was not new but was familiar with both places?* If I could also be with a teacher in the school in a way that I might attend to continuity of a 'story to live by' for the teacher I might get a more insightful picture of the situation for each of them. I agree with Bateson (1994) who says:

> *Insight,* I believe, refers to that depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side. Learning by letting them talk to each other. (p. 14)

When I look back at my own stories I see how the landscape and different experiences I had with it, either changing physical places, changing positions on it or experiencing changes to it while I was already on it, always changed the contours of my story. But I see how my 'story to live by', my identity, was able to continue when I was able to be in responsive relationships with people. I have gained a deeper understanding of the need to attend to relationship in ever changing situations through writers such as Dewey, Bateson, and Polyani. But the professional knowledge landscapes of schools (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) gives me cause to wonder about the conditions that might be more or less present in a school to limit or enhance a principal's and a teacher's 'story to live by'. The experience of the ever changing school landscape is heightened more at a time of principal transition to a school. The research puzzle has emerged. I have chosen to study the experience of continuity of a principal's and a teacher's identity during a time of principal transition to a school.

CHAPTER 2: INQUIRY FRAME

Being Mindful

I chose narrative inquiry as the way to study the experience of continuity for a teacher and a principal in a school in which the principal is newly arrived. I attended to a principal's and a teacher's experiences in a way that I may think about their 'stories to live by' (Connelly & Clandinin 1999). They describe a 'story to live by' as identity. 'Stories to live by' are those stories that dwell in a person's heart, that a person is committed to, and those that a person authors or co-authors. Attending to the living out of these stories for a teacher and a principal, I was looking at the limitations and possibilities for continuity within the context of a particular professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The professional knowledge landscape of school was the organizing framework for the study.

The metaphor of a professional knowledge landscape was developed within Connelly and Clandinin's ongoing research program on teacher knowledge and teacher education (1986, 1988, 1990, 1994, 1999). I am drawn to this theoretical framework because it reflects the notion of relationships amongst people, places and things. The framework also attends to the temporal dimension of situations because narrative histories become part of the interaction that comes into play. Narrative history travels with the people who come and go upon the landscape. As with my own story, past experiences have shaped the person I'm becoming. There are institutional narratives and particular histories of schools. Things like policy and research and events in a school have history too. Kerby (1991) writes that the past is never over and done with. It lives with a person and it 'figures in' to our knowing of present situations. It is needed to help make present experience meaningful. Kerby says "The past, on the contrary, and if our analysis is correct, should be viewed as part of our lives, and because life is unfinished, so is the meaning of the past" (p. 31). The school landscape it is not simply a host of different people occupying a school and doing different things but a host of histories also coming together. Clandinin and Connelly give a sense of this in describing teacher stories–stories of teachers–school stories–stories of schools (1996).

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) speak of the storied school landscape as both an intellectual and moral place. The in and out of classroom places on the school landscape can shape the experiences of those who live there because the narrative histories of the school, the community, and the people at the school all interact to affect the quality of educational experiences for a teacher and a principal in these different places. Following Dewey's (1938) premise that the quality of an experience, whether it is to be deemed educative or miseducative will depend on the quality of the interaction and the quality of continuity, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) have found that three desires, the desire to tell stories, the desire for relationship and the desire to reflect on situations are fundamental to constituting educative experiences on the school landscape. There is the need to be able to express these desires on an ongoing basis. I retold my own stories of experience within the professional knowledge landscape framework. My own educational and life stories intertwined as I recounted Composing a story to live by, Encountering a sacred story , Living a secret story, Developing a cover story and Making my way with hope. Sharing these stories helped to situate me within the inquiry. They stirred my wondering about continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and a principal in a school at a time of principal transition to a school.

Through their ongoing research program with educational practitioners, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) found the landscape within classrooms, the 'in classroom place', is often experienced differently than the landscape out of the classroom, the 'out of classroom place'. For the most part the 'in classroom place' is a safe place for teachers to live out their stories of practice, relatively free from scrutiny. The stories lived out in the relative privacy of the classroom can thus be called secret ones. There is a sense of authoring a story of practice, in the phrase–'my classroom'. But in living out stories of practice alone there is less possibility for learning, as I felt in my resource room where I felt an uncomfortable smoothness about 'how well things were going'. I was missing response. It is the primacy of response that becomes the "touch magic" (Yolen, 1981, p. 69) to awaken and transform. I recalled in my stories the learning I constructed through play with my sister as a child; the learning I constructed in the first few years on a school landscape as a teacher-librarian working with other teachers, and the learning I was constructing on the university landscape in conversation with other educators.

Teachers need others in order to engage in conversations where stories can be told, reflected back, heard in different ways, retold, and relived in new ways in the safety and secrecy of the classroom (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 13). In contrast to the 'in classroom place', the 'out of classroom place' is a place where, for example, professionals come together for meetings and professional development. It is a place typically filled with knowledge 'funneled' into the school system from the conduit. Policy statements and research findings are issued. The decrees have the quality of a 'sacred story'. I told of my surrender to the theory driven practice story when I succumbed to teacher knowledge over parent knowledge in Matthew's placement in a readiness class. I told the story of abandonment and the construction of a cover story in the 'out of classroom place' to fit with policies on increasing student achievement. I wanted to be seen as doing what was right. There was no inquiry about what these policies might mean in terms of children and learning and education. It would just be done.

Policies and research funneling onto the 'out of classroom place' of school seem abstract, removed from their relationship to people, things and events. Research and policy is presented in finished form, stripped from the historical, narrative context in which it was deliberated and made. Staff in a school are not encouraged to open the ready made package, to think about and discuss the funneled materials, because there is a moral flavor to these pronouncements. They are what should be; other people's visions of what is right to direct teachers' and children's classroom lives. The supremacy of the theory driven practice story helps ensure school staff at the lower end of the educational hierarchy will do what they are told. For me, as I think about a 'story to live by', I see authorship in question. Kerby (1991) writes that it is only through expression that persons come to know themselves. The extent to which a teacher on a school landscape has the opportunity to express the three desires becomes critical in terms of teacher identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Taking into account the difference between the in and out of classroom places on the landscape, I wanted to experience the situation from the two different places on the school landscape–to develop multiple perspectives on continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and a principal during a time of principal transition to a school.

Literature around principal succession is not extensive but what there is often focuses on models, phases and stages to the 'process'. It appears to be the system, not the person that is attended to. There are suggestions for improved effectiveness. Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) for example, set out a model specifying process and outcome variables such as the selection process, organizational structure in the school and successor effects. In their work, positive outcomes around organizational effectiveness with principal succession are deemed ambiguous because of the disruptions in communication, power and decision making. Stine's (1998) case study suggests that principal succession is similar to that defined in a model of corporate succession developed by Gabarro (1987, p. 1). The five stages include: taking hold, immersion, reshaping, consolidation and refinement. The conclusion suggests that a leader with vision can, through successive stages, have a significant effect upon the future of the school.

Hart and Bredeson (1996) look at principal succession within a social interaction perspective. They suggest the need for principals to acquire the knowledge, skills attitudes and values of the social role. They write about a process model of professional socialization to the role. They write that the process is complex, each principal succession is unique and that there are constraints in what a principal can actually do. There is a sense that knowing the constraints, such as gender, race and ethnicity, school traditions and power relationships will be helpful in a quest for successful principal succession.

Literature also focuses on reaction to principal succession by teachers. Again, it seems the principal is considered in terms of their effectiveness in the system rather than for who they are as persons. Johnson and Licata (1995) for example found than that teachers assess succession in terms of its effectiveness on organizational factors. Principals are rated most effective when teachers see themselves as being allowed to maintain, predict and control their work. Daresh (1993), investigating problems faced by a new principal, likened reaction by staff as that of the classic Kubler Ross (1969) 'stages of grief', such as denial, anger, bargaining, and acceptance. The conclusion is that new principals should learn that staff reaction to them is not personal and that it is helpful to know about their predecessor's leadership styles.

I see these images of identity for a principal as fixed and static. I see the principal identified by others in terms of roles and styles. There is acknowledgment that succession is a complex process but in the end the principal must be seen as embodying the role. I see it as being scripted as I was as 'new student', as my son was as a 'disabled child'. The 'person' is left out. It is the person "in the principal's office" (Wolcott, 1973) that I want to attend to. Wolcott's study (1973) suggests that it is in the best interest of 'the system' that the principal not become an educational leader inspiring independent thinking teachers. He concludes "School principals serve their institutions and their society as monitors for continuity" (1973, p. 321). Of course this is the continuity of things. I propose to attend to continuity from the perspective of the person, from the perspective of their own continuing 'story to live by'.

Although we can speculate about stories of principals, district stories and stories of the broader political and social milieu at any given period of time, research using the framework of a professional knowledge landscape of a school in transition when a new principal comes is new. I used the experience I gained rereading and coding field texts composed at Bay St. School in the early 1980s, to augment my understanding of the situation in a school where a new principal had recently arrived.

In coding the field notes, I read the story of a researcher, a participant observer in a classroom. Through 'living in the story' in this way, I gained a richer understanding of what it means to do narrative inquiry, in both the living and the telling. The ethical dimensions of the work were always paramount. The relationships amongst the researchers and participants were closely attended to. Care was taken to ensure that the narrative accounts of experience, formulated by the researcher, were always negotiated and shared with the participants to illuminate understandings of the situation.

The coding terms for the field notes reflect aspects of the professional knowledge landscape of a particular school. The coding I did of the 1981 fieldnotes, was a time in which a principal recently arrived at the school. I worked to conceptualize qualities of the school landscape comprising people, things and events in a dynamic relationship (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) during a period of principal transition. I developed insight by nesting my current inquiry within this historical narrative inquiry context.

Several ideas struck me about the situation. Dewey's (1916) fundamental premise that education is a social process and that participation holds the key is echoed as the landscape began to shift at Bay St. School. Stephanie, the grade one teacher at Bay St. School, was able to adapt and move with the changes. The interaction that took place between Stephanie and the researcher helped Stephanie try new practices. Continuity was present for Stephanie as she told of her experiences in the past or projected her intentions forward to the future. She could do this as she thought and talked about her program with the researcher. At this time in the early 80s, the new project school policies for Bay St. school could have been unwelcome. But, like children who build a relationship with their research topic, she had the opportunity to put herself into the situation, and give voice to it. For Stephanie there was a sense of flow, the possibility to re-imagine, to reinvent and recreate. This was the possibility that the researcher's presence seemed to give Stephanie.

However I noticed that Stephanie told and lived her story in the relative safety of her classroom. She was willing to risk new approaches inside her classroom but it was a secret story. She was still unsure in the 'out of classroom place'. She was worried that when she passed her children on to the grade two program, teachers with a more traditional program would wonder why the children had not completed their basal readers. She worried about how she would be viewed by these colleagues in the 'out of classroom places'.

The next piece of the story of Bay St. School, a school in transition, resided in this 'out of classroom place'. It shows how the principal, Phil, could be 'scripted' by staff, because of his position, as the one in charge of the school. Staff did not seem to know him well. Dewey (1916) suggests boundaries that separate people from each other make for an undesirable society in which to learn. In this tale, unlike Stephanie's story, there was no accounting for the principal's actions. School trustees and others, part of the historical milieu at the time, saw Phil's job as putting policies in place to satisfy certain stakeholders (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). No researcher 'lived' as a participant observer with the principal on the landscape of Bay St. School. His intentions are not clear because we did not hear his part of the story. In the field notes, his story is a missing piece.

Living and Telling My Story: Positioning

Considering the Bay St. story, taking into account the difference between the in and out of classroom places, I wanted to experience the situation from two different places on the school landscape–to develop multiple perspectives on continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and a principal during a time of principal transition to a school. Attending is a key element in Bateson's work as she presents a way to think about the learning process that adapts to shifting landscapes. As an anthropologist she has come to see participant observation as being a kind of learning well suited to a changing world. Like Dewey (1938) her underlying premise is that learning and living are inseparable. To be able to grow in life that is always moving she suggests that education be structured around attending and participation. By attending she is talking about being present to the person. She writes of attending to what comes as glimpses, at the periphery. Attending for Bateson includes feelings, and tacit knowing that Polanyi (1969) called embodied knowledge. Attending from the multiple positions I had lived, as newcomer, parent, parent of a child with disabilities, as teacher from an 'in classroom place', as a teacher-librarian from an 'out of classroom place', as a friend and graduate student and so on, gave me different perspectives, allowing me to see more.

In this narrative inquiry, I 'lived' and composed stories of my experiences with a principal in the 'out of classroom place' as a newcomer, a parent, a teacher-librarian, a fellow graduate student and friend. I 'lived' and told stories of my experiences with a teacher in the 'in classroom place' as a parent, a primary and resource teacher, a teacher-librarian and graduate student. Following Polanyi (1969) I attended from my own embodied knowledge. I did not ask my participants to tell me what their 'stories to live by' were and whether they were able to continue them in this situation where the principal had recently arrived at a school. Rather, I attended in a particular way.

The philosopher David Carr (1986) helped me understand how I might consider continuity of a 'story to live by', how I might attend to continuity of identity over time. He writes that in life we continually strive for narrative coherence "in the face of ever threatening chaos at all levels" (p. 90). He suggests that as people create stories of their lives they are also creating their identity. He believes a moral and epistemological sense is at work to allow life to be experienced as a story rather than being experienced as a mere sequence of events over time. He writes accordingly that people attend to what is significant in their pasts, what they value in the present and what they intend to do in the future. Out of these experiences people create their own 'stories to live by', their identity.

Carr adds that "Coherence seems to be a need imposed on us whether we seek it or not" and that our lives "admit to sometimes more, sometimes less coherence" (p. 97). In our life when there are moments of distraction or extreme boredom, experience can become fragmented or flat and formless. Carr says that we are less able to create a meaningful story and our lives start to fall apart leading eventually to the dissolution of the self. But identity continues when we are able to express events as a story. The sense of being author to a life story in the making is critical in order to know who we are.

Therefore I attended in a way that would allow me to explore significance, value, and intention (Carr, 1986) for those with whom I worked. I wanted to illuminate their point of view, what they felt worthy, what they cared about. It was an intimate form of inquiry. In order to do this it was important to choose a method of inquiry that would enable me to participate in relational ways, that would enable me to reveal movement over time, and that would enable me to attend from my own storied knowledge, my own 'story to live by'. Accordingly I chose narrative inquiry for my research methodology.

Choosing Narrative Inquiry: Relationship

I used Noddings' (1986) ethic of caring as the ethical guide for my research. She writes, "In educational research, fidelity to persons councils us to choose our problem in such a way that the knowledge gained will promote individual growth and maintain the caring community" (p. 506). I was aware of the commitment this involved for both myself and my participants. I was mindful of a caring relationship with them. It meant that in talking and working alongside me, they put their trust in me. I took seriously the responsibility that this implied. Anonymity, through using pseudonyms, was negotiated at the beginning of the research and confidentiality and the ability to discontinue at any time was assured. I followed the ethical guidelines set forth by the university. However, narrative inquiry work means that relationships which develop over time must be attended to throughout the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For me, it meant being attentive in all my decisions so that my participants' interests were uppermost. I never consciously let my position as researcher overtake my responsibility to the caring relationship. I let myself be invited into my participants lives. I did not impose.

Negotiated relationship with my participant co-researchers provided the safe place within which I engaged in my narrative inquiry. The way I entered the field, the negotiation of inquiry topic, the participatory nature of my presence in the field and the way I composed, shared and interpreted research texts were always a joint construction involving myself and my participant co-researchers. The research was nested within a relational framework.

Being in the Field

Participation is the key to learning when there is continual change (Bateson, 1995). She believes that participant-observation is not just for researchers but is a way of learning in a world where nothing stays the same. Narrative inquiry is participatory research in which the researcher both lives in, and tells, the story as it evolves. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) use a metaphor of the researcher joining a parade to give a sense of being a part of a landscape that is moving. Participation is fundamental and it is felt as a caring relationship which is attended to throughout the research journey. In narrative inquiry, being invited to do research in a school is like being invited to join the parade. The professional knowledge landscape does not stand still. The movement is captured in the narratives as they are developed over time–my story and my participants' stories. Participation is also extended to the community of readers as the textual form invites an audience. With narrative, audience is expanded. There is more participation.

For my inquiry I attended in ways that allowed me to think about 'a story to live by' for a teacher and for a principal. I attended intimately to particulars (Jackson, 1992) and to my own embodied knowing, often markers of the qualitative aspects of situations. As Jackson writes,

> The moral qualities of a person or a situation seem to float in ether. They are part of the atmosphere. They are intuited before they are articulated. This is why it is so vitally important to stay in touch with one's feelings as a classroom observer. (p. 43)

Being mindful of the three dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) meant that I attended both broadly and deeply in order to have more opportunity to make connections amongst experiences, to tell a story. I attended from my own embodied knowing to the situation I was experiencing. This meant that I attended to what was significant to me, to what I valued and to what this directed me towards in the future.

Caring relationships (Noddings, 1984) were of uppermost consideration throughout the study. I negotiated a relationship through ongoing conversation with one of my participants, the principal of the school, over a period of many months during biweekly conversations at the school during 1997-1998. I describe this negotiating year in Chapter Three. It was within this relationship that the research topic evolved. The wonder about continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal newly arrived at a school was mutually constructed. The principal's identity in the Bay St. School field notes had already proven to be a puzzle for me. The question of continuity of 'a story to live by' for a teacher already at the school would enrich understanding for the principal, the teacher and me. As the approved inquiry began I negotiated a relationship through mutual conversation and participant observation with a teacher who had been at the school for some time. As my stories describe I negotiated my entry and my exit through volunteer work in the library. I slipped in and slipped out.

In September of 1998, I continued to make my presence felt in the school as a whole. I made several visits to the library to assist Jeanette with a name tag project. Classes of children arrived in the library to paint wooden heart brooches with their names. During this time, Jeanette wrote an invitational note to all the primary (grades one to three) teachers in the school, to introduce me as a doctoral student and to ask for a teacher volunteer participant for the study. Jeanette told teachers that I was doing a narrative inquiry and that I was interested in the stories from an 'in classroom' (teacher) and 'out of classroom' (principal) and possibly teacher-librarian place during a time of principal transition.

The note was put in teachers' mailboxes. At first there was only one response. Jeanette and I wondered if having me in a classroom along with a student teacher might seem too much for teachers. After a few more days I had three teachers respond and I sent a thank you note. I set up a meeting to give more information for their consideration. The meeting took place in Jeanette's office. She herself was not present but the three primary teachers, the vice principal and the teacher-librarian, Cindy, were there. I brought in some snacks and Cindy set a positive tone by remarking on my assistance in the school library. I talked about the inquiry. The teachers were most interested in how I would fit into their classrooms. I told them I wanted to 'live' in their classrooms for a lengthy period of time so that it would be a more natural situation. To a child or parent I might be seen as a teacher's aide, although parents would be informed of my presence in the classroom as a researcher. I told them I would 'follow' the stories rather than structure the inquiry with specific questions about change as I felt the questions might frame answers. They nodded and murmured knowingly.

They were all interested in the idea that once the stories were perused and checked by them that they would then be shared with the other. I talked about my hope that a kind of dialogical relationship would be formed. There would have to be the willingness to trust or it could not be done. I would not be saying anything to anyone about what the other person was thinking while I was collecting field texts. The information would be confidential. They would have to wait and see the stories. They wondered if I would be talking to others, the parents and children for example. I said I would love to do this but the intensity of the study meant I could only concentrate on a few. I would however involve others through my participant's perspectives.

Cindy talked about the risk involved, for each of us. She joked about being fired by Jeanette if the wrong thing was said. For me she said, it was risky because I had no idea what I would get. She laughed and concluded that if it was boring then it would be boring. I said I did not expect people to put on a show and be amazing to make a good story, only that they be themselves and if nothing happened that would be interesting to me. I said we all have intentions but how things work out might be another story. I ended by saying I was interested in the stories of practice they were composing, that there would be opportunity for reflection with me, and that I could give them assistance in the classroom as they wished.

I was struck by the response. Although I said I wanted to give them some time to decide, all three of the teachers told me they wanted to participate right then and there. I had no idea I would have this 'problem'. I said I would let them know. What commitment to community building in the school I said. It was difficult for me to choose but after some consideration I asked Karin. She worked with year one and two children and I was most experienced with children at this age level. She had also been a teacher at the school for many years.

I began my research in Karin's classroom in October, 1998. My research plans were of a general nature, not specific. The design of my narrative inquiry was malleable, so it could be pulled this way or that to follow different pathways. Attending to people was the key. This narrative inquiry lead not to an answer to a question but to a situation revealed as Shulz (1997) found. I hoped to understand the experience of continuity of 'a story to live by' for a teacher and principal in a time of principal transition to a school. My intention as researcher was to carry a torch to illuminate the landscape as we moved together on it.

Composing Field Texts

I 'lived' at the school for three mornings a week for approximately seven months, (October, 1998-April, 1999); two and one half days with the teacher and one half day with the principal each week. The lengthy period of time was needed because the embodied personal nature of my participants' knowing was revealed not only in their conversations with me but in their actions which I storied and shared back with them for further conversation and mutual insight.

Bateson (1994) suggests that it is necessary to attend broadly and deeply in order to increase the likelihood of connecting to something recognizable. For me, attending to people within a three dimensional narrative inquiry space encouraged me to look broadly and deeply, increasing my ability to link experiences in order to tell a story. This is how I paid attention as I began my participant observation and conversation to compose field notes. I wrote down my observations and bits of conversation immediately upon leaving the school each day. But I also jotted notes when ever I had the chance, while at the school. I collected documents, photos and artifacts. I kept a personal journal. These were the field texts of my narrative inquiry. I asked my participants to reflect on their practices and tell me about them. I kept things open because I wanted to travel to their worlds.

Conversational interviews with my two participants were either taped, or recorded using field notes, depending on the situation. Attention was always paid first to the quality of the relationship. I attended to what mattered to them. Through the conversations, I listened for their feelings, attitudes and values because I was interested in the meanings of their experiences of working in the school (Anderson & Jack, 1991). Minister (1991) noted that there are gender and culture differences in the way people experience the research interview or conversation. She writes that women often engage in empathetic interruptions, jokes and laughter to reinforce communal bonds and even completion of each other's remarks. I kept these ideas in mind as I followed the conversations from the perspectives of my participants. The conversations were a mutually constructed act. I used personal journals to keep track of emerging ideas and to develop metaphors as I reflected on, and analyzed field texts. The journals showed my thinking path as I made my way.

Choosing Narrative Inquiry: Temporality and Movement

Carr (1986) suggests that the past, present and future experience of time are made understandable through our ability to story events. Incidents are not recalled as a random sequence but, rather, as human beings we are given to arranging events of the past in a certain way to tell our story. The arrangement of incidents is authored to give a temporal dimension to events as lived. Carr suggests that narrative shapes our experience of time and gives us a way to live meaningfully in it. The interplay of the past in developing the value of the present helps to direct future actions.

Polkinghorne (1988) describes human action (which includes the action of speaking and writing) as “the poetic expression of human existence as it moves towards valued ends” (p. 146). The unity and wholeness gained in narrative understanding is different from understanding gained from organization that puts facts into categories. Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that we are primarily expressive beings, interpreters of meaning, not objects to be interpreted. Narrative is a form that reflects the fluidity of human experience in time. Stories embody the temporality inherent in the ever-changing situation. Stories have multiple meanings; some of them are tacit. Multiplicity widens and deepens our attending. Conle (1995) suggests that when we are ‘armed’ with a wealth of stories we have a better chance that a story can be called up to resonate with a particular situation. The story acts as a marker of recognition making the negotiation of new and moving landscapes a little less daunting.

Speaking from his experiences as an anthropologist for forty years, Geertz (1995) writes eloquently of changing landscapes, of the difficulty of trying to catch a glimpse of things, to set it down in writing as life marches by. “It is not history one is faced with, nor biography, but a swarm of histories and a swarm of biographies. There is order in it all of some sort but it is the order of a squall or a street market: nothing metrical" (p. 2). I see it fitting in with finding patterns in stories of experience as I have found in my own stories. Encountering different landscapes made the stories seem different but looking more closely there were threads that I kept pulling through, those of imagination and relationship. Embracing the multiplicity in stories allowed me to see the continuity–not in the situation but in the making of my self. Geertz concluded about continuity that, "It is not 'of events' or an 'innerness' drifting through time; it is continuity of political task" (p. 29). Geertz links continuity to personal agency.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) say narrative inquiry is especially suited to grasping shifting landscapes, because it incorporates the temporal nature of experience. The sense of movement is captured through consideration of a metaphorical three dimensional inquiry space. There is meaning to be gained by attending to experience from an inner personal perspective as well as an outer social perspective. There is a need to be mindful of the past, the present and the future aspects of matters attended to. It is necessary to think about place, the situation. Narrative inquiry requires multiple attending.

For example, I was mindful of the narrative history of my two participants, the teacher and the principal, as well as the narrative history of the places on the landscape of school where they resided. I spoke of the narrative history of school as 'old stories of school'. 'A new story of school' reflects a narrative future embodied in the intentions, hopes and dreams of my participants. I attended to situations from a longer term perspective to get a richer view. I attended back and forth.

Furthermore I had to be cognizant of the place of my participant observation because the place can never be extracted from the situation that is encountered. The 'in classroom' and 'out of classroom place' on a school landscape are experienced very differently for teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) write that often there are moral dilemmas and confusion in identity as teachers move back and forth between the places. A teacher spends most of the day in the 'in classroom place'. A principal spends most of the day in an 'out of classroom place'. As I moved around the school I kept place in mind. Things always happen in a place.

Through my participant observations and conversations I attended to the outer social situation for my two participants. I kept track of ongoing 'unplanned for' changes for my participants and in the landscape as I lived on it over time. But I also needed to move from the outer place of my participant observation in the school to the inner place of my own thoughts and feelings. I did this by recording split field notes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 86), which made a place for immediate ideas that came to mind as I recorded my field notes directly after visiting the school. I reflected and wrote further in numerous journals at my home.

Choosing Narrative Inquiry: Embodying 'A Story to Live By'

Narrative inquiry is an artful form of research. It involves both living and telling. It moves as language and actions become threads used to weave worlds. Threads drawn out in the stories of experience become recognizable as patterns. In my own stories of living on, and in, shifting landscapes the patterns of relationship and imagination kept emerging to provide continuity of my own 'story to live by' in different contexts: as I moved from place to place as a child with my sister, as I learned to live a new position as mother with my son Matthew, and as I initially lived out my practice as a teacher-librarian in a school. Always it was a close relationship that enabled me to continue to 'author', that enabled me to improvise to continue my own 'story to live by'.

Dewey's (1934) idea of art as experience ties in with narrative inquiry. He writes that a work of art is not a representation of how things are but rather an interpretation pressed out of the whole narrative being of the artist. As artists we create our lives (Bateson, 1989). As narrative inquirers we are intimately connected to the creation of the work. In narrative inquiry, as in other forms of qualitative research, there is a strong sense of the researcher in the inquiry. It assumes knowing to be a personal act. Understanding branches outward from tacit knowing to interpretation of events as lived (Polanyi, 1969). This idea threads back to Dewey (1934) when he says that there is no thought unless it is brought to life by emotion. In this way the relationship of the artist to the work of art extends outward to communicate with the audience.

Carr (1986) does not see narrative solely as representation, overlaid, as "window dressing or packaging" (p. 9). He writes that experience itself is constituted narratively because of the temporal nature of every day life. Actions are purposeful, reflecting what is significant from the past, what is of value in the present and what is intended in the future. He writes "where we are speaking of experience and action, what is basic or irreducible is more complex than mere sequence" (p. 44). For me, studying my participants' experience closely gave me insight into the way they saw the world. I began to understand my participants' 'stories to live by' through attending to what was significant, to what was of value, and to what they intended.

Composing Research Texts

Composing research texts began with coding field texts I gathered. They accumulated from field notes, transcripts, journal entries, photos and artifacts at an alarming pace. Feeling it was starting to get away on me, I began in the midst (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), starting with what I knew. I used narrative terms such as 'story of school', 'parent's story', 'teacher's story', for example. These were straight forward and a place to begin.

As I became immersed in the field texts my coding terms became more interpretive. With an eye to continuity of a 'story to live by' I began using terms such as 'wholeness', 'temporality', 'tension', and 'attending', for example. I then organized these coded field texts into paged chronicles that spoke to some of the themes that were emerging. I include a sample chronicle as Appendix B.

I brought my layered chronicles for a four month time period, for example, fall or winter to the principal and to the teacher for their responses. The individual chronicles were several pages long. They were compiled from the events that were significant to me. I purposely omitted some conversations, some things I saw, using Noddings (1986) notion of ethical care for research participants as my guide. But I wanted to invite my co-researcher's response. They each might want to add to or delete some of these events from the stories of experience that I would compose. I thought it would be more comfortable for them to comment on these before I put them into story form. My voice would be very present once it was in story form and I felt that they too could be nervous about hurting my feelings.

The chronicles took on a temporal dimension as I noted dates so that changes overtime were more explicit. As well, because I was composing chronicles for the teacher and for the principal, a spatial dimension was highlighted. The place of principal in the 'out of classroom place' and the place of the teacher in the 'in classroom place' stood out in this process.

I used the chronicles, my coded field notes and transcriptions, my journal entries, photographs and artifacts as field texts to compose my stories, the research texts. As I wrote the stories of experience I was implicated. Carr (1986) suggests that authoring or telling the story is a moral event because the teller is responsible for the way it is arranged. He writes that it is hard to create a story when nothing makes sense. Fragmentation, distraction and disconnection seem to occur. He says we use "practical imagination" (p. 91) to give the story coherence, to give it meaning–so we can cope. For me this fit with my own embodied knowing, that imagination and relationship were involved in continuity of my own 'story to live by'.

As I wrote the stories I thought about how they reflected the narrative inquiry space that I was working in. My inner feelings, the outer situation and the temporal dimensions of past, present and future as well as the specific place of my inquiry were acknowledged. I included my own wonders and reflection of the very experiences I was writing about. I used a light italic font to depict my inner thoughts and feelings at the time. They were my inner responses recorded in split field notes. I used a darker font to represent a deepening sense of the situation as I wrote the stories several months later.

I wanted to show in a concrete way that the writing itself was an interpretive process. I wanted to show that the writing was not 'after the fact', after everything had been figured out. The lighter and darker fonts speak to my understanding of the situation, becoming more insightful because I was attending over time. To me it represents my coming to know as a construction. Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) speak of trusting the process. They say that "with each retelling the terrain will shift and change as new insights surface and take shape" (p. 58). I captured this deeper perspective through the improvisatory act of using different boldings scripted fonts to designate my own reflections over time. Since then I have come to call this process narrative braiding (Ely et al., 1997).

I wrote stories in earnest over the summer months. How many should I write? Write until you're finished, Jean said. I always enjoyed bringing pieces in to Jean to talk about. She listened and responded, and this always encouraged me to continue. It profoundly deepened my understanding of the relationship of responsive community and the ability to continue 'a story to live by'.

In narrative inquiry the stories told are shared with the participants to negotiate meaning and get response. As I wrote I wondered if I was doing the stories justice. I have a different narrative history than my two participants and my voice permeates the stories. I knew that I would construct things slightly differently from the way they did, but I was trying to tell stories of their experiences. Schulz (1997), in trying to sort out this dilemma, writes that perhaps the stories of narrative inquiry need to be read with a participatory stance rather than the efferent or aesthetic one described by Rosenblatt (1982 in Schulz 1997). My voice was present in their stories. I felt I had a trusting relationship with my participants but would it hold when I shared the stories?

The stories of experience composed by me for the teacher and the principal were unique. Trust was the key to participation for my research. I believe that only in safety is uniqueness revealed. The initial research texts were shared with each of the participants; they responded to them in writing and in conversations. Later, as was negotiated from the beginning, I gave each of them the research text written about the other participant. The sharing of perspectives, from the teacher's 'in classroom place' on the landscape, and the principal's 'out of classroom place' on the landscape was deemed valuable amongst all three of us. It was this three way interaction that I imagined as the ethic of care that Noddings (1986) spoke about. It was for me a setting up of a situation where "the knowledge gained will promote individual growth and maintain a caring community" (p. 506). Our three way get together was, for me, a collaborative act where all three of us came together as a responsive community. I arranged a meeting at my house to reflect on all the stories. I tape recorded the conversation. In order to represent that conversation I experimented with using 'found poetry' (Richardson, 1997; Butler-Kisber, 1998) to share their responses in a way that honoured the emotion of the moment. Richardson (1994) writes that

> An experiencing person is a person in a body. Poetry can recreate embodied speech…because poetry consciously employs such devices as line length, meter, cadence,…and repetition to elicit bodily response in readers/listeners. (p. 142)

Moreover, she writes, "How we are expected to write affects what we can write about" (p. 520). I needed to create a vivid rendering of the moment. I wanted to portray a deeper sense of the lived experience. Through a poetic representation I felt I could heighten the sense of the personal dimension in the situation. I used Jeanette's, Karin's and, sometimes, my own words. The words were pulled from over forty pages of transcripts from the meeting. I began by selecting phrases from the transcripts that spoke to a certain theme. These phrases strung together formed a narrative chain (Butler-Kisber, 1998). I made a further selection of significant words and phrases for the poems.

It was at this meeting that a 'story cloth installation' was made by my two participants. The principal's and the teacher's 'story to live by' was embodied in this piece. The story of this improvisatory event is captured in Chapter Eight of the dissertation.

Throughout my narrative inquiry I used metaphor. It was one of the ways I could use my imagination to help me think. I believe Eisner (1991) when he writes:

> Imagination is an absolutely essential resource in the conduct of any kind of research. When the data is messy, the processes studied unpredictable, and the contingencies complex, imagination enables us to make sense out of the situation. (p. 186)

Metaphor enabled me to hold on to that which is hard to see but only felt (Johnson, 1989). Carr's notion of "practical imagination" (1986) is relevant again in allowing me to connect ideas and generate further thought. Bateson (1994) asserts that metaphors are not fixed but can change and move like the shifting landscape. They served to hold tentative ideas, for a time. Johnston (1996) presented her dissertation using a travel metaphor in order to capture her own research journey as she embarked on a pathway towards new ways of thinking about the teaching of international literature to high school students. The work was grounded at "Mile One" (p. 11) in Johnston's own experiences of teaching an unexamined Eurocentric literature in apartheid South Africa. As the dissertation unfolds at succeeding mile posts, the reader is introduced to a Canadian teacher's multi-ethnic classroom place many years later, where sociopolitical discussions were balanced with reading and discussion of literary texts.

As my narrative inquiry proceeded I found myself engaged in a 'dialogue with the work' (Fulwiler, 1987) in my journals. Over and over I noticed how the structure of my inquiry seemed to fit with quilt making. I do not consider myself a quilt maker but I have made a quilt. I lived for many years in Nova Scotia where quilt making abounds. As I thought about my dissertation as a quilt, it made sense to me to choose the pattern of a crazy quilt.

Crazy quilts are made from whatever bits of fabric are available. This gives the quilt a unique look. In my inquiry, I, too, created stories from the experiences at hand. With the crazy quilt there is no prescribed pattern; attending to people as I did in my research meant that there was also no prescribed pattern. What was created was unique. Improvisation is needed in order to make a crazy quilt a harmonious whole–what has been laid down must be attended to before placing the next piece. Patterns emerge but the outcome cannot be predicted. It is a wonder and there is a continuing sense of possibility. This seemed to fit with my narrative inquiry of continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal and teacher in a school; it fit with the three way meeting, gathering round, sharing the pieces, to create something together. But as with crazy quilts, and as with my stories, creating a harmonious whole with bits and pieces is easier said than done.

I chose the crazy quilt for a second reason. In times of oppression such as in slavery in North America, or in times of silence such as in the lives of many women before suffrage, the crazy quilt was often associated with an expression of voice (Otto, 1991). I notice that silence can be a cover story on the school landscape. I know from my story of abandonment that my voice as well as the students' voices became silent. For my research, the crazy quilt metaphor was another way of thinking about participation in a responsive community and what that might mean for voice and for continuing a 'story to live by'. I am hopeful that my work, like a quilt, might have both aesthetic and utilitarian purposes; that it might be handed on to others to use in ways that might make sense to them.

And now the stories. They tell what happened.

CHAPTER 3: THE BATTING

Negotiating Relationships

In this chapter I reveal the beginning of the relational context within which my work resides. The conversations with the principal, begun when we both attended a graduate class together, were continued on the new school landscape to which she was assigned. I visited her at the school three or four times a month. With her permission I began to capture the experience in field notes which I composed. I also began taping some conversations later in the fall of her first year. I was not sure where this might lead but the trusting relationship that we had developed in our story group was making it safe for each of us to share our perceptions, our past experiences and hopes for the future. I loved our conversations.

We learned from listening to each other. I saw our conversations as an educative experience. As the year unfolded, and current school experiences were laid alongside our own previous experiences, part of our narrative histories, we both began to wonder about continuity. Stories of my own life experiences of living on ever changing landscapes and stories of her own experiences in this new school which seemed so different to her experiences in her last school became a touchstone drawing us together towards a mutual interest in the topic of continuity for a principal at a time of principal transition. Another layered wonder came about because I was involved in coding the Bay St. field notes at a time of principal arrival to a school during that same year. Stories of principal transition from the perspective of a principal continuing to create an identity, a 'story to live by', were absent in the educational literature. I begin now with stories from that first year.

Conversations: Attending a Different Direction

A quietness settled on the landscape as I drove to the suburbs. It was early September and school had begun. I was checking the street signs so I wouldn't lose my way. My trusty map was on the seat beside me and I glanced over every so often to make sure I was taking the route outlined with my pen the night before. It would not be long now.

Could that be it I wondered? I swung into the parking lot. Now I had a better view. A low brick building set against a drift of expansive fields behind. This had been farmland once. But back to the building. There didn't seem to be enough windows.

I liked the look of the building beside it better. It had more architectural interest and definitely more windows. It was the community building for the neighborhood. Interesting, I thought, this separation of the community and school. I thought about my friend Jeanette. She had been assigned to the school as new principal. The school looked like a vault I decided. It didn't help that I had already heard some stories from her.

At lunch last summer she told me she was concerned that some school traditions seemed divisive–there was tension around the volunteer recognition award. Timetables and preparation time were sacred. 'D' s were written on report cards. This would be a problem because Jeanette felt children should be working in the success range. She told me she had introduced herself at an assembly in June by using one of her beloved children's books, Yo! Yes! (Raschka, 1993). The children were polite in response but she felt a sense of 'principal overload'. There had been so many principals in the last few years. Jeanette concluded that, after a myriad of successive principals, teachers must be feeling the school could run itself. A barbecue in the summer at Jeanette's house proved to be an omen. Not everyone wanted to come.

As I turned off the ignition and opened my car door, I noticed how nervous I was. I was worried about my friend Jeanette. Staff would likely approach her cautiously. They had enough reason to want to sit back and wait. Parents noted that she wore sneakers. At soccer games that summer there was speculation as to why she left her last school. No one knew that she hadn't wanted to leave, that the parents and teachers had pleaded for her return. I wondered about the stories that were already circulating.

I started walking towards the front door. The school flags waved in the wind at half mast, honoring the short life of Princess Diana, while at the same time telling me that there was life in there. What would it be like I wondered ? Butterflies danced in my stomach. Walking into the vestibule, I noticed the walls. I saw a poster showing hands of many colours. The words proclaimed unity through the heart and working together like a family. There was also a message to school patrollers, and a notice to incoming visitors to remove wet footwear. It seemed to be a mix of messages. There was no one around.

I turned a corner and walked into a large outer school office. In front of me were secretaries busy at their work. The work spaces, filled by telephones, calendars, computers, and stacks of papers told a story of business and efficiency. I sat down to wait for Jeanette. I felt self conscious, like I was in the way. I could just make out Jeanette sitting in a little office past all of this. She was talking quietly with a student. Eventually she came out to greet me with a warm laugh and hug. This welcome is what I came to look forward to.

Jeanette's office was unlike any principal's office I have seen. A wreathed door opened to reveal a large circular table with chairs in the middle of the room to be used for conversations. It was piled with papers, coloured markers, beautifully illustrated picture books, half-filled coffee cups and sometimes a few toy action figures belonging to her son, Bruce. There was a small desk in the corner with a computer and telephone but even this was softened by pink and mauve hues, a pretty light, a woven frame clock. And then there were the bears. There was a whole den of them. They were propped on shelves, squatted among children's books, sat cozily in armchairs and danced on a wallpaper strip that encircled the room at the ceiling. The teddy bears were a symbol for Jeanette. She wore them like a uniform–on her sweaters, her vests, and pinned close to her heart.

This office was one Jeanette filled with meaning. The artifacts that she gathered here told of stories, stories of her son, stories from her own childhood, stories from children in her last school. In photos and books, cards and mementos, she brought forward pieces from her past–to link her to things that mattered. One was her last school, a place where she belonged.

Jeanette's door was always open. Right from her arrival there was a steady stream. Children were there first. On this day she had been giving cookies to kindergarten children as they came to see her. It was important to Jeanette that children get to know all the people in the school. At her last school, children had a special bond with teachers, not necessarily only with their classroom teacher. The special relationship would continue with the child so that, for some, it lasted seven years. She was thinking about the relationships of people in a school like those within a family. Thinking about the children she said, "often we don't pay attention to their need for continuity" (field note, September, 26, 1997).

These early days were still imbued with the sense of new beginnings. I loved talking to Jeanette about her dreams for the school. The stories of experience at her former school, were what she brought forward to allow her to imagine a future. She could not begin out of nothing on this new landscape. Just as she arrived at school in the midst of stories already there, she would also bring her own stories, as a comfort and a guide to help her navigate this new place.

I thought back to the ideas of community we played with earlier in the summer when she first heard of her new assignment. She talked about school as a village where teachers contributed their gifts to make a more vibrant whole. In a school, there might be a healer, a protector, a keeper of the dream. As a principal in her last school she thought of herself as the storyteller. Jeanette said her task as principal was to build pathways to connect people to each other and to her. She would do this as she listened to the stories and to conversations they would share with her. In her last school talk was alive with ideas and wonders about children and learning and teaching. There, she wove the threads from these conversations to compose a story of school–a school with a sense of place.

I began to see a space for me within the village. I too could play a part. I could listen thoughtfully as she told stories and shared images of her last school. I could be there to listen as she talked about her dreams in the future. But there was something else that could enrich our conversations. It was a common bond that brought us together in the curriculum class the year before. Sharing children's literature, something we both loved, might help create more touchstones on the path. I had my treasury at home that I would draw from. I packed books in my bag and brought them in. She would share her precious finds with me.

On this day, sitting side by side at her office table, we read a book of poetry called the Shaman's Circle (1996) by Nancy Wood. I noted the words used to group the poetry in the book. The words were: becoming, connecting, honouring and transforming. "It's perfect Jeanette–just what we've been talking about," I said (field note, September 26, 1997). The words spiraled through our conversation that day giving focus to the ideas we had been playing with. The words spoke of Jeanette's hope for the school. She decided honouring should come first. I thought about how she, Jeanette, needed to be honoured too.

Cindy, the teacher-librarian, dropped by. She had known Jeanette for years and was new to the school also. She said the library was a mess. Computers were under stairs on makeshift tables, wires were dangling. There were empty book racks and a recycle bin at the front entrance. Cindy talked about bulldozing–an interesting counterpoint, it seemed to me, to the words becoming, connecting, honouring and transforming spoken in our conversation a few minutes earlier. But now we thought about the situation at hand–a fragmented library and "people all over the map" (field note, September 26, 1997).

For Jeanette, just trying to get a grip on this new landscape was difficult. With all the daily 'goings on' it was making it even harder to get a sense of this. She had to learn about established traditions in the school and learn them fast. She had to go with most things in order not to upset stories already in place. She did so want to honour, but sometimes it was just too much. She told me about the ritual of birthday pencils. Each child would receive one personally from the principal on the day of the child's birthday. It would probably take about 100 hours over the course of a year she calculated. She believed she should use her time in other ways. She didn't want to do this even if it meant she would be storied as the principal who didn't give out birthday pencils. But it made her worry. She was the new person after all.

Other concerns came up as the days went by. She never knew which way to go. She didn't know the stories behind the issues but she was expected to make the right decisions. One of these was about pizza lunches. The children wanted them and staff didn't. The parents organized and supervised but there was something about them the teachers didn't like. She didn't know what. There was resentment. The reason for doing pizza lunches had been lost it seemed, yet the tradition went on. Jeanette did not want to follow the expected plot line, to take power and decide. She wanted to build the kind of relationship with staff that would allow her to talk about these things. But she was caught in a web of expectations.

As October's rays settled lower in the sky, darkening the light around us, I began to be more and more enveloped in her story. As she told me more of what she believed for children and teachers in a school, I began to think her last school was a counter story (Nelson, 1995), a place of transformation. Jeanette's image of her former school was of a rainbow community where everyone contributed. But at her last school there were no traditions when she arrived, there were no stories in place, because it had been new. She opened the school. She and the staff began at the beginning to build a place together.

But now Jeanette had arrived in the midst of stories, in the midst of traditions. At a professional development day in October, Jeanette told me that a request for rules and regulations spoke of one of the stories in place at the school. She was finding that some of the teachers did have strong beliefs but their passion was directed inwards towards their classrooms not toward the 'out of classroom place'. She wondered about teachers leading secret stories in their rooms, afraid to say too much in the ‘out of classroom place’. She confirmed for me that staff meetings were lifeless. Questions about recess needed answers. Documents from central office, downtown, needed explanation. There were no wonders to explore.

How could she get to know people, to honour them, and they her, if no one engaged in conversation? She began to speak to me with urgency. She talked of small group meetings around a piece of literature to open conversations–anyone who wanted to come, could do this. She wasn’t sure about canceling staff meetings altogether but the idea had crossed her mind.

As the crisp yellow and blue days of fall slipped by, I listened. I heard more of her images for the school in the conversations that we had. Always the images linked back to her last school. One of these was her rainbow image. Now it blended together with her hopes about the community that ‘could be’ in this school. She talked softly but clearly, as she returned to that image many times. She said,

> The more I’m expected to do alone, the less I’m able to do. That’s why the rainbow is so cool. The individuals, the colours, can be just as vibrant, just as beautiful, but put them all together and it works together to make the contrast. Of course there’s the magic in all this too. It’s there and then it’s not there. It has that presence. Everybody says, ‘Oh look at the rainbow’. We remember that image. (taped conversation, November 21, 1997)

The important thing for Jeanette, the recurring theme of all our conversations was that of the community. She continued as we talked that day.

> Jeanette: As long as it stays at the individual level it’s not going to help…that you look at personal change in the company of other people, which when you think about it, the definition of company being people who choose to break bread with one another…because that’s interesting and the whole idea of found communities and chosen communities and choosing to break bread and looking at personal change in the company of others.
>
> Pam: Hmm, that’s really interesting Jeanette and you know when you are thinking about small group meetings as opposed to staff meetings–thinking about found and chosen–that would be the way…

Jeanette: Yes, but some may choose for the wrong reason…the relationship is so important to me, I can't work without it. (field note November 21, 1997)

Jeanette told me about a speaker, Jean McNiff, whom she heard at the university. Jean McNiff traveled from her homeland in Ireland to talk about pastoral care. The room had been packed. Jeanette's habit was to glean ideas from others and then reconstruct them for her own situation. I couldn't wait to hear what Jeanette had to say. She told me that Jean McNiff talked about a framework of care. Jeanette liked the way McNiff talked about structures. They were not something to shy away from but rather they were needed in order to teach the values. In our conversations she said,

Jeanette: How do you develop that framework of caring? The ways that I can influence staff and the ways that I can influence children?

Pam: Hmm hmm.

Jeanette: And it's got to go further than that in the ways that the people I have influenced can influence, so eventually we get enough of the community supporting because as long as it stays at the individual level it's not going to help.

Pam: But it's a different way of having something come about as opposed to policy. It's a whole other dimension. We do things because of rules–what we're supposed to do–this is so different–what you're trying to do is replace rule and dependency with value as a way to do things.

Jeanette: Everything I know and understand works within a framework of values. (taped conversation, November 21, 1997)

Jeanette wanted shared values, not rules and regulations to guide decision making. But, as she was learning, with all the daily goings on, many of which hit her out of the blue because of her newness to the situation, it was hard to keep focused on the big picture. "I'm being trapped into being a detail person" (taped conversation, November 21, 1997).

Outside the wind swirled and scuttled the brittle brown and yellow leaves as I walked along the pathway into school. The trees were becoming skeletons standing naked on the landscape. It was late November. I settled into my chair beside Jeanette. I was starting to feel all that she was going through. It was bringing back memories of moving, always moving, to new places as a child. I remembered trying so hard to use the right word so I could fit in. Was it running shoes, plimsoles, or sneakers in this new place?

The situation was curious. Jeanette seemed to come from far away also. Yet her former school was physically so close to this one, and, on the outside, the structure was very similar. Yet she said, it seemed so different. She thought it was the stories pointing to the directions people were attending to. 'One on one' meetings in November were telling. Many teachers were expecting recognition for running efficient classrooms, for executing sound management, for following prescribed procedures. This is what they had been valued for attending to. Outside markers of school I thought–ingots of the school stories playing out at the time. Jeanette told me that the people at the school did not seem to value who they were. "They don't want to risk," she said (field note November 27, 1997). Yet Jeanette wanted to undertake a journey–an adventure–together.

Jeanette was clearly attending to something different from what many of the staff were attending to. It was a different story than the story where she as principal would tell, while the rest of the staff would obediently follow. In her last school, relationships guided the interaction not hierarchy and control (Lambert, 1998). Clearly, her 'story to live by' was rubbing up against stories of school that had been valued in the past. She knew that 'cover stories' in the 'out of classroom place' could mask what people really thought. She truly wanted to know. She would ask unanswerable questions, "How do I articulate a path so they can choose to walk with me?" (taped conversation, December 12, 1997).

She wanted to get ideas, to engage in some lively discussion on matters important to educating children. She wanted to suggest there could be other ways of thinking about what they as staff did. Release time, for example, could be played around with. But there was so little response in staff meetings. She was frustrated but she would not give up. She told me "It is my intention that we will have these conversations…that we talk about our organization and belief systems that support…to use what we have, including people as a way of thinking about school and the purpose of learning" (taped conversation, December 12, 1997).

She wanted to join with them and she wanted them to join with her, like the colours of the rainbow. But the metaphor of a wall to separate kept coming up instead. She wondered. Her story was no more and no less valuable than anybody else's. It was another question to talk with me about. I often wondered how I could help. She told me how it was helping her just to have me listen.

Over the last several years, I became fascinated with inukshuks. It began as I researched the Inuit people with a grade three class at a former school. In Hide and Sneak a picture book by Michael Kusugak (1992), a small Inuit girl became distracted by a little hairy creature of Inuit lore and lost her way. Catching glimpses of the inukshuk on the horizon enabled her to find her way home. I built an inukshuk in my garden in the summer and collected articles about them as they turned up. I brought one in to show Jeanette. Making an inukshuk requires that large stones be piled on top of each other to form an almost human form on the Arctic tundra. As a landmark on the landscape, they had both symbolic and practical uses for Inuit people: to show where food supplies are cached; to indicate a route or dangerous crossing; or to stand as a silent messenger attesting to the consciousness of the human spirit. It is a message that reaches back to the ancestors and forward to the future–a guide along life's pathways. It seemed to make sense to bring this up. It seemed to make sense in terms of maps and landscapes, stories, values and relationships; notions that education could be spiritual and moral journeys.

Jeannette took it further. Jeanette's 'story to live by' was embodied in her conversation and the things she started to do. She started to think of a way to put the image of an inukshuk into practice. How would you make an inukshuk for school she wondered? They were made of raw materials, I suggested. They were made with whatever was at hand. She thought about people and children. She would get some rag dolls at the mall. We thought about children's books for the structures, to hold the values and to hold up the dolls. I would look at my treasury at home and check out the library. It would not be hard. It was something that I loved. It was something that Jeanette loved.

January, and still I continued on my visits. I was bundled up, and as I headed out along opaque slippery roads towards school, it seemed appropriate to think about inukshuks. After some small talk of the holidays, Jeanette got out her bags of stuff. She had been shopping. We played around with building an inukshuk…it wasn't working very well with the small blocks so we got some larger kindergarten blocks from outside. The school name was made with smaller blocks. We chose books purposefully. In the centre was the Mud Family (James, 1994) Voices of the Heart (Young, 1997), The Dreamer, (Rylant, 1993) and If Sarah Will Take Me (Brouchard, 1997). Above these was a small stack of journals and then All the Places to Love (MacLachlan, 1994), and Crow and Weasel (Lopez, 1991) for the arms. I said I could bring in a large smooth stone from my garden for the top. I knew just the one. Jeanette put around some of her soft dolls, teddy bears and touchstones. I draped the inukshuk with ribbons of blue and pink and mauve. Then we sat down to come up with words to go with this. After many words had been spoken, she thought that the word trust could encompass all of this, to stand for this school inukshuk. I did so love being part of this creation. I added "and with trust comes participation" (field note, January 9, 1998).

I was struck by the way the symbols in this inukshuk gave rise to so many ideas. I thought about the history of peoples that do not record in written form. I thought about storytelling, rituals and sacred places. I thought about living history, moving continuously, never stopping. How different from categorizing, conclusions, and answers that might shut down conversation. With Jeanette, I was always moving. The inukshuk was a symbol of **our** moving journey as well.

The inukshuk stood for hope as well. Even a tiny glimmer was enough to move towards. At the last staff meeting in December she thought she detected a faint crack in the wall, "just a tiny wedge," she said (taped conversation, December 12, 1997). Jeanette started to notice some tension amongst the staff. It seemed they were not all of similar thought. This sliver of light, barely perceptible, was drawing her back. Back to seeing beyond, seeing what was hard to see, back to the inukshuk, the marker to move towards.

Conversations: The Set

Jeanette always listens to her son Bruce. He was playing with his miniature cars and trucks. He was telling her something about the imaginary world he was creating. We were in the midst of lunch at a small restaurant close to the museum. It was a balmy New Year's Eve afternoon. Even though we were off the landscape, Jeanette was thinking about school and a decision to give staff enough sense of her intentions so they could decide whether they would want to 'join with' her or not. Jeanette thought we should each make a prediction, put it in an envelope and open it next year.

Today, however, we planned to visit the new aboriginal gallery at the museum. The idea came up in early December on one of my visits. I was carrying a postcard photo in my bag as I walked into Jeanette's office. I couldn't get the incredible face of chief, Pound Maker, out of my mind and I wanted to show her. She pulled the children's picture book, The Mud Family (1994) off her shelf. It caught her eye, she said. Sitting at her round table together we poured over the illustrations. We were drawn into a conversation about landscape. We decided that the landscape itself had been etched into the faces of these elders. She wondered if it had to do with wisdom, the experience of living life on the land. "Of becoming" I wondered. She thought about the innocence in the faces of the children, "It's like the experience hasn't printed yet" (taped conversation, December 12, 1998).

But back to New Year's Eve…after our lunch together we sauntered over in the fine warm weather of that El Nino winter. The gallery was dimly lit. We did not feel hurried. Speaking in hushed tones, we wove around displays, pulled into the story presented to us. A sound system ensured the steady, resonant voices of elders that accompanied us; listening posts to a storied world. Many aboriginal peoples collaborated to tell this story. Jeanette was struck by the amount of symbolism. The tipi was designed and painted to show the ancestors in the sky at the top, and the people and the earth at the base. The Peace Pipe ceremonies showed smoke curling up to the spirit world. It was through the tipi symbols and Peace Pipe ceremonies that a vaster world could be acknowledged.

It reminded me of a conversation in late December with Jeanette in her office. She had been frustrated with the seeming lack of curiosity about practice which she encountered so often at staff meetings. She said she felt that some of the people at the school were living within a band–a world tightly bounded.

> Jeanette: So the whole notion of attending. They don't understand when we talk about vision and passion or even excitement or joy that takes you out of the band–even when I talk about tragedy that we need to think if we can, that even one person, one child, experiencing death or despair or whatever…
>
> Pam: There has obviously been attending to things where there has been value, but there are other values…everything is there–it's just what you attend to.
>
> Jeanette: Recognition and acknowledgment and encouragement come from attending to what? (taped conversation, December 12, 1997)

Weeks later Jeanette helped me see more clearly what she meant by living outside the narrow band. She said she had been asked for her ideas from a friend designing the wing for a new children's hospital. She said it was important that if children were sick, this be acknowledged so they could go from there. She didn't think the children's real situations should be smoothed over and not attended to. It would be painful to tell and painful to listen but it was the lived experience. For Jeanette, this was not something to hide. I thought about schools I had lived in and the painful stories that were often swept out of sight or lived in silence.

At the museum, we saw that a broad range of ideas were visible in the everyday lives of these aboriginal people. They were part of the beadwork, the decoration on clothing, and in the direction a tipi door was facing. It was a storied landscape. In contrast the school landscape seemed barren. Only a narrow range of ideas seemed acceptable in the 'out of classroom place'. If there were other stories, they were hidden from view, as secret stories in classrooms.

It was March, a soft rain was melting into wet slushy snow. This day when I arrived I showed her a chapter from a book I was reading. It was called Wisdom sits in places (Basso, 1996). It became another touchstone for our conversations. The article talked about the places that triggered stories for a native man considered to be wise, places such as the old cottonwood tree, two hills, a bend in the river. Tying stories to features in the landscape became a natural way to remember the stories so they could be revisited, again and again to impart wisdom to be used on life's journey. The ideas resonated with Jeanette. As always, Jeanette brought everything back to schools and education. She spoke,

> Jeanette: I thought about school and wondered what we do when we clear schools out in June in preparation for the fall. Do we clear some of the stories out when we do that? And most schools don't talk about traditions that need to be kept and things that need to fade away either because they're related to a particular person that you don't need to keep it.
>
> Pam: It certainly is bare at the end of the year and I hate that.

Jeanette: But we take all of that away.

Pam: Taking the stories away–well, taking the triggers to the stories away.

Jeanette: So when you change classrooms every year and kids change classrooms, you're taking triggers away, taking the stories.

Pam: It's almost like you're going to new schools all the time.

Jeanette: And so if you–even if they collectively remember the story and are not in the same location, the story has some relevance but it loses it's power as soon as the group of people moves somewhere else. It becomes an historical memory but it isn't as relevant because the trigger isn't there. (taped conversation, March 13, 1998)

This conversation led Jeanette to think about portfolios and how children use them to tell the stories of their learning. She continued.

Jeanette: Kids can go back to the beginning and say–oh I remember that and they tell the stories and so they're taking the wisdom of whatever happened then and transferring it to where they are now and it's a way of bringing continuity in transition. But when you have a report card–that is a standalone document with no triggers, there's nothing to bring the memories back.

Pam: Because the triggers are all going.

Jeanette: And I think it's really important for kids to have triggers to be able to say, Oh, I remember when I had that problem in grade one, then they can use their wisdom to talk about other things and that's the other thing that article reminded me of. One of the reasons he was considered wise was because he had stories to tell. There was something to hold on to there and so if I look at my office–some of what's here is new–they are going to be triggers for later and yet some of it is not new–my bear, the picture from my one/twos. They have the stories that go in lots of different directions–that I bring forward. I decorated my office in the way I did–I created the triggers for next year or the year after or the next time I move schools. (taped conversation, March 13, 1998)

Jeanette's thoughts returned to her last school. She felt her touch was still there. She was in the library one day and she had come across The principal from the black lagoon (Thaler, 1993). She laughed as she told me the children had put her picture on the front of the book. She thought it was this kind of thing that triggered stories. She pointed out to me that it was also the sense of fun that was important and linked this back to where stories come from–she thought–from tragedy, from 'ahas', from joy and emotion.

Again I was spiraling back in my own mind to research project work I had done with children. I was remembering the excitement, and the celebration. I was getting a richer view as I listened to Jeanette. My understanding was growing. It was both deeper and broader. By revisiting, I had been brought forward to a new place in my thinking. I thought of Jeanette's office, resounding with triggers to her 'stories to live by', her identity. She told me she felt her office did have a sense of place and that she felt at home; it was cozy in there. But there was tension because she knew as principal, "I've got to find a way to be attached out there" (taped conversation, December 12, 1997).

I began to realize as I paid attention to what Jeanette was doing she was answering her question. I realized she was creating a landscape to trigger stories or ideas broader than the narrow band. She had been doing it all along. First, there was the inukshuk placed in the outer office for all to see, an ever present signpost on this school landscape. Changing the out of classroom place would be easier, she told me, because she couldn't yet talk to staff about what was in her heart. This would do for now. I was beginning to learn Jeanette's ways. She showed me that she works with what she has. What she had was the 'out of classroom place'. There were no stories there and she felt free to add her touch.

Throughout the early spring, triggers started to appear. In her own way she was retelling a story of Basso's old cottonwood tree, a bend in the river, a peace pipe circling up to the heavens. She was not working on a natural landscape but in the 'out of classroom places' on a school landscape. But her intentions were the same. She hoped ideas and stories would be conjured by these triggers to open up the narrow band she was encountering.

Voices of the heart , a book by Ed Young (1997) that I had shared with her in the fall became central to the new decorating scheme. Jeanette called an artist to enliven tired hallways. The artist constructed a large wooden painted mural of children holding heart-shaped frames of red and yellow and blue to display their artwork. Following this idea, the notion that children were the heart of the school, began to manifest itself in the newly created stationery, pins, and t-shirts for the school.

Jeanette's eyes were twinkling as she danced me round the school to see the changes. The outer office was opening up like a breath of fresh air. The furniture had been rearranged and staff changes meant there now was a direct sight line into Jeanette's office and she could see out to the hallways. She was no longer 'closeted away'. The tone was more welcoming. Much of the bright work involved her own expenditures and many things were done by volunteers. She had to be cautious with the dollars. She couldn't be too blatant, not when she was new. A new school banner reflected another direction with 'A place to belong' hanging next to a previous school story embodied in the motto 'We're number one'.

Knowing my background as a teacher-librarian, she wanted me to come and see the library. She managed to get a parent to come in to redesign the bookshelves. They had all been lowered so the children could reach the books and could be seen. In the story circle, heart and teddy bear cut outs had been fashioned on painted handmade wooden shelves of mauve and rose and teal. "The staff don't yet know the teddy bear is me," she said (field note, March 20, 1998). The wooden shelves were filling up with books and plants and stuffed animal toys. Cindy, the teacher-librarian, couldn't keep them on the shelves. Arching over these shelves were the words in wooden block letters of teal and yellow spelling out "Children's Ways of Knowing".

Thinking back to the Basso article we wondered if changing the landscape in this way would trigger stories–bring them out. It was having an effect on me. I was dipping into the past, thinking about the library I used to have: the stuffed animals, building toys, comfy chairs to help children feel at home. At the time it just felt right to decorate my library this way but now because these triggers had brought me back, I was able to retell this experience as making a kind of home for children. I wished I could go back to my library. I would add much more now that I understood what I was doing. The past is a treasure-trove of events that we can use to discover the meaning of the present. But we have to go there. We have to be drawn back to our memories, our stories, to go forward, to retell, with a broader vision.

Conversations: The Puzzle Evolves

It was March and I had not seen Jeanette for a few weeks. Jeanette phoned to ask if I could come tomorrow afternoon. She sounded urgent. I knew she had been really busy with the school plan and budget. I drove to school the next day and we looked at the plan together. The forms declared what they as a school would achieve; what they would ensure; what they would improve. The phrases carried the certainties of business language. I wondered if they might sidetrack people in schools into forgetting all they knew or believed in. Jeanette's plan was full of spaces to give people the opportunity to figure things out.

I recalled that although there have been documents out for eight years or so on children constructing knowledge, it just came in with a stroke of a pen and we were all supposed to be doing it. I told her I remembered a former school staff member reading the document over and over, by herself, trying to get a sense of what constructing knowledge meant. Notions of constructing knowledge are huge epistemological shifts from say, a notion of received knowledge (Belenky et al., 1986). It is a very complex thing I thought, needing time for conversation. The emphasis on reflective inquiry, that is, on getting people to ask questions and tell stories of their practice in this school plan gave some breathing room. Jeanette told me that, in a nutshell, this was her story, her beliefs.

When she presented the plan to staff, several wanted to know what it would look like. She told them she couldn't say exactly. She wanted it to come from them. I said she set the tone and now the story had to emerge, like a creation story. In a creation story, someone or something may emerge out of the ground, or out of nothingness to become. Campbell (1988) associates the creation principle with god power in the world. Jeanette liked the idea of creating a story of school and thought of herself as breaking out and how difficult it was. We began to imagine migration. The native American writer Silko (1996) writes that migration stories were told over hundreds of years as her people tried to find the place where they were meant to live. Eventually that place was found. Physically it was only eight miles away. If stories could emerge, be told and then retold there would be the possibility of movement. But I wondered, how long might it take?

She said the school plan was a beginning but there was no conversation. She had heard not a word. She thought some teachers were not opposed to what she was talking about. But they didn't seem to have any mechanism yet to connect to it. Jeanette needed feedback. But silence in the 'out of classroom place' remained. Staff meeting conversation continued to be dominated by questions around ability tests, rules for indoor shoes and the playground. Only a few staff spoke and, as much as she tried to open conversations, there seemed to be no curiosity about practice. There were no wonders about what they were doing and why. There were no stories to examine. Jeanette now believed that staff did have stories but that the stories were not as meaningful and relevant or productive or wise because if they were reflected on, it was happening all alone. There was no response to expand or deepen the view. There was little movement.

As for Jeanette, it was imperative that she journey. She had to be able to express her 'story to live by' to make it grow. She had experienced her knowing expanding and deepening at her previous school. She felt the memories. She was committed. She was helping me understand this. She said,

> One of the ways of defining our world–however we choose to do that is by creating relationships with people, places and ideas so when you create relationships with those things you start to define the world that you then make contributions too by extending the relationship which expands the world…Relationships with people, places and ideas are the springboards for

> expanding–the ability to construct new knowledge." (taped conversation, March 13, 1998)

But she also told me of her frustration. Later she said,

> I'm not in the position where I can connect stories from teacher, child and parent. I'm not connecting any of the conversations. I'm not connecting any communication and so it's stopping and I'm getting distracted and I'm not remembering. (taped conversation March 13, 1998)

It was all the little things occupying so much of her time. But little things could be big things in the eyes of staff. She never knew. She had arrived in the midst of stories and traditions already in place at the school. As a principal she was expected to make decisions. It was difficult not to make a few mistakes. She needed a safe place. But it was hard to build relationships with staff in this situation, hard to build the relationships with staff to give her that safe place.

Living the story was so much harder than telling it, and it was shaping her response. As much as she intended, for example, she had not been able to share the inukshuk with her staff. It was part of the story that dwelt in her heart, part of her 'story to live by'. What if her story was not understood? What if it was stomped on and shattered? She couldn't bear it.

If she did not have the safe place to express her 'story to live by' was it in danger of survival at all? Both of us were becoming more and more intensely interested in continuity. It was not the continuity of things–stories passed down through a conduit on to the landscape of school when a new principal comes. We were looking in another direction. It was continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal coming to a school. We also wondered about a teacher who had been at the school for a number of years and the experience of continuity of a 'story to live by' for that teacher. Having experienced both an 'in classroom place' at school as a teacher and an 'out of classroom place' as a teacher-librarian I was curious. Phil's story in my coded field notes of Bay St. school was that of a principal newly arrived at a school. It interested me because there was so little known of his experience. But it was more than curiosity I was feeling. I was looking at Jeanette. I was enmeshed in her story. The relationship solidified my commitment. I really cared.

With the warmth of April, tulips for sale in the outer office and the spring tea a success, I was growing in anticipation of the project I would be undertaking at the school next year. My research topic evolved through my conversations with Jeanette. It would be meaningful to both of us. I would look at continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal and a teacher at a time of principal transition to a school. Jeanette and I were already friends but I wanted a participant in the classroom to create a richer understanding of the situation. I began to think about negotiated entry to the inquiry once again. Jeanette helped me with this.

She talked about my presence as a volunteer in the school. I could do things in the library–something I was familiar with. It could be a 'way in' to the school as a whole and I could do it by being a helpful person there. Cindy said she would be happy to have me. This would also be helpful to Jeanette. She wanted to make the library not only central in the school but more interactive. She wanted it to be a place where children could be involved with each other. She said the children were good at extracting information but they were not connected to their information.

I talked with Jeanette about the way I did project work with children–the importance I placed on the arts, literature, memoir, hands-on experiences and talking together to draw them in–to create relationship in learning. Jeanette was thinking about centres around spring because it was something that all the children could participate in. She envisioned combinations of year sixes working alongside year ones. Her idea was community building. When should I start I wondered? "How about May?" she suggested (field note, April 24, 1998).

I discussed Jeanette's idea of centres to attract children to the library with Cindy. Cindy, who worked with Jeanette in her former school, said she thought Jeanette was a visionary but she herself was more practical. She wanted to go fairly slowly and simply as she didn't know how things would work. She wondered for example if the children would be encouraged, allowed even, to come down. She understood Jeanette's need to show that both younger and older children could construct their knowing in different ways.

That weekend I drove to the countryside in search of spring! The following week in the library, we made a creature-filled murky pond centre in a large glass jar with magnifying glasses, a paper folding centre for designing flying machines, a playdough centre for fashioning bugs, information books and stories. Cindy said she wouldn't normally do something like this but she trusted Jeanette.

On my next visit we talked about our plans in the library. A teacher-librarian's role is interesting I told Jeanette, because there is no given script. A teacher-librarian's role could range from dusting bookshelves to being a kind of cyber librarian depending on perception. Jeanette thought this could be positive. She said,

> Jeanette: So sometimes it might be better not to have an identity.
>
> Pam: Cause you can do more.
>
> Jeanette: Cause you're freed up. You're freed up from the story position.
> Pam: Stories are so interesting because you can move but also be stuck.
>
> Jeanette: And you don't necessarily like the story, which is interesting.
>
> Pam: Well that's probably the case for people when they're storied. It's not very creative is it? (taped conversation, May 8, 1998)

It made me think about the way stories might move, through telling and retelling after response. I thought about stories with my sister and how they evolved through ongoing conversations and our play. As I thought about stories moving I wondered about Jeanette. Jeanette had been moved. She had replaced the former principal. It was a change but it was not evolving change. There was little or no participation for the people involved, the teachers at the school, the principal, the parents or the children. I wondered if stories that are stuck, stories that don't move are set to be replaced. Replacing one story with another to get change. Jeanette wanted movement too but she was going about it in a different way. She was trying to start a conversation.

She was making the most headway with the children. She said, "and you know like Matthew it's easier to open a conversation with kids with teddy bears so they can talk to me–a little kindergarten kid introduced me to her dad–this is the bear girl" (taped conversation, May 22, 1998).

As I often did, I brought up a story of my own. Our grown son Matthew has a very close adult friend. I said that Megan doesn't just care for Matthew as his 'official' support workers do but she plays with him. Last weekend she was invited to dinner and Matthew wore a tie and a name tag. He made a menu and took 'the order'. There seemed to be so much more to the relationship I told Jeanette. I told Jeanette the support workers he has, the ones he really likes, are the ones who play with him, who pretend. The other ones are caring but I think the playing helps him grow. Jeanette was listening and thinking. "There's a warmness to play," she said.

> Jeanette: So the whole idea of care is much more involved–and play. So the play levels the playing field.
> Pam: Yes, especially for him–he doesn't have to know how to do something to do it.
>
> Jeanette: So education linked to play–and the other link is story telling because that's a way of making sense of the imagination. (taped conversation, May 22, 1998)

She was thinking about next year. I'm advertising for people with a fine arts background, she said. "I want people who play and it's back to Matthew–not extended childhood but capturing childhood. I want to capture childhood."

"Make it how it really is," (taped conversation, May22, 1998) I responded. Play and the arts might encourage broader participation for children and for teachers.

The bustling activity in the library was a hopeful sign. Children of all ages were coming in. Cindy was handing out playdough freshly made by a parent volunteer. The swamp water table was in need of more magnifying glasses. The children were whipping through the books to identify the muck they were seeing. The paper folding activities spread over three tables and the paper kept running out. Jeanette wandered in. Cindy pulled her over. She was beaming. "Is it lively enough for you?" she joked (field note, May 22, 1998).

As the days went by the interactive library was a hit with some of the teachers too, especially the primary ones. "This is just what the school needs," said one. This teacher joined the children creating origami figures. The class had been 'doing' Japan. She was thrilled because the children could see she knew how to make paper airplanes. "I'm a star," she exclaimed (field note, May 27, 1998).

In June, Jeanette asked teachers to work in teams on themes for next year around children's ways of knowing. She suggested that the teams each take one aspect–wisdom, belonging, games or expressive arts–words she scribbled on a scrap of paper one of the days I was in. She wanted to provide a structure but not fill it in. Her idea was to have teachers understand that their jobs in the classroom were only part of what they do. She had tried to start a conversation; she had tried to enliven the 'out of classroom place' in the school. Now staff needed to do this she said. She needed something happening to help create a new story of school.

The June rush was fast approaching. I had not been to see Jeanette for a while. I had been busy in the library but now I enjoyed having a few minutes to connect with her again. She told me she had been caught in her office with open boxes. Somebody thought that she was leaving. But she was only unpacking her books. Jeanette said, "It's really interesting to me that this year hasn't been a beginning. I mean it is in some sense. It's a context building year. I understand the context" (taped conversation, June 5, 1998).

There had been some changes in school wide practice. Reporting curriculum levels had been separated from anecdotal remarks in a learning summary designed with a pocket. Assemblies were taking place every three weeks. The physical landscape of school looked different. But was this a responsive community? Was it a community to sustain and nurture a human being with a 'story to live by'?

The pervasive power of a silencing story of school continued to dominate the 'out of classroom' staff room place. It was baffling to Jeanette because she said that in small groups people would talk and seem excited with ideas. But the atmosphere at staff meetings had not changed. Policies and procedures still went unquestioned in this place. There was no opening up. For some, the band of vision would remain narrow, at least publicly. Jeanette was reaching out but she was hard to recognize because she was not doing what was expected of a principal. She was beyond the band. A wider vision would be needed to see her on the periphery, to make her out, like the inukshuk on the distant landscape.

At the end of the school year Jeanette shared with me that she was worried that, without sustenance, her passion would go. She said it was tempting to just go into the principal 'box' role, issue edicts, expect compliance and just say 'forget it' with her attempts at conversation. She didn't want to. It was just so hard. Tears welled in her eyes. "You are so brave. You are so good, Jeanette," I said giving her a hug (field note, June 19, 1998). There was nothing I could say.

CHAPTER 4: STORY PIECES

Stories of Experience–Jeanette–Fall 1998

The stories in this chapter center around Jeanette's experience in the fall of 1998. This was the second year of her transition as a new principal to the school. I spent one half morning a week with Jeanette in her office space and around the school. Concurrently I spent two and a half mornings with Karin, the primary teacher in her classroom. This chapter is grouped around four storied themes composed from field notes, transcribed conversations, photos, artifacts and my own personal journal entries as I 'lived' the experience with Jeanette and wrote later of the experience. As noted in the methodology, I used lighter and darker scripted fonts to represent my own deepening awareness of the situation. The lighter font is composed from my reflections at the time of writing my field notes (split field notes). The dark bolded font represents reflections composed later as I wrote the stories. The storied themes include Remembering What You Know, Paradox, Working Around the Edges, and Kaleidoscope.

Remembering What You Know

It's easier to attend at the beginning, before it all starts. I arrived at school in late August and was amazed at the transformation. The rusty brown walls of the outer office had been painted. I noted the colour–Robin's egg blue. The old curtains were down. The sun could pour through the windows. Teddy bears migrated to the outer office. They were peeking around the desks, shelves and doorways, even on the switchboard, wherever they could be fastened, propped or wedged.

With a posy of nasturtiums in my hand, I walked in to see Jeanette and we both laughed to think that this was probably as tidy as it would ever be. There were no papers on the floor but the phone rang incessantly: calls from parents, calls about hiring staff, calls about programming, calls about testing for children. In the midst of this activity, she was preparing for her first professional development day, August 27, 1998. She asked me to look at the Dr. Seuss book, Hooray for diffendoofer day (Seuss & Prelutsky, 1998). It is about a school where teachers are all different, do not follow rules and children learn to think. She thought she might use it with the staff for the professional development day.

I noted the state of the chairs. Some were lying in pieces on the carpet. One of the staff was taking them home, four at a time to recover them with teddy bear fabric. I helped by taking some chairs apart with a #8 Robinson drill. Some people wondered "what she had me doing" (field note, August 26, 1998). Jeanette told me that Bruce was with his grandparents for the week and she thought she would be able to ease into school but she had forgotten about the pace. Interviews for the new kindergarten position were being set up in the room next door.

The following week, things were calmer, at least on the outside. We sat side by side at the big round table as she showed me the sparkling crystals we would hang in her window to catch the light. She had given one to each of the staff, a personal rainbow maker on that first professional development day. What a difference the sunlight through windows made. I told her I would bring my camera to record all the changes. "Perhaps it's the only changes there'll be this year," she said (field note, September 4, 1998).

We looked at the book Dandelions, (Bunting, 1995) which she wanted to read to the student teachers next week. It was a transition story about settlers moving west, planting dandelions as a reminder of home. "Sometimes you have to wait for the change to happen because ideas are planted…and it's another season before they begin to bloom," she said (taped conversation, September 4, 1998). ***She was talking about the student teachers but she could easily have been talking about this school landscape since her arrival. The story captured for her the emotional aspect of moving***. Jeanette noted her isolation. She said that last year she had wanted to continue the story of her previous school but that these are all different people. She said that she has to look at these people. ***Each of the school people had their own narrative histories, composing part of their own ways of making sense of the world, embodying their own 'stories to live by'.***

Thinking about each person was so important; to account for the complexity, to account for the time needed to build a relationship of walking together on this school landscape.

She was still new. Often school people puzzled her. She was upset she was being bypassed on some things, like the interpretation of new regulations, such as the 'Freedom of Information Policy' affecting school life. There were phone calls downtown for 'rulings'. She felt a staff expectation that she call all parents in one classroom about an upcoming event. She was kept waiting for some meetings. *There was a sense of confusion about Jeanette 'as principal'.* ***There was a sense that staff were puzzled too***. A visitor to the library one day commented to Cindy that "Your principal seems like a normal person" (field note, September 17, 1998). Cindy, who knew Jeanette from their previous school, said she would tell Jeanette; she would think it a compliment.

Jeanette did not live the story expected of a principal. She told me:

> They don't know me well enough still. They don't know where my expertise lies or my experience–where all of that is. They still see me as a manager which is really unfortunate because it's a part of my job I don't feel I do very well. (taped conversation, September 4, 1998)

But people who did know her came to the school to support her. Cindy, the teacher-librarian from her former school, was one of them. She worked part-time in the school along with another teacher, also from her former school, who would do the release time this year by using an arts-based approach. Another former teacher colleague worked on displays for the library as a volunteer. "Jeanette gets these people to come," Cindy said (field note, September 17, 1998). She is able to do things differently because she is supported by people was another comment from a mutual friend who knew her well.

As September unfolded, I began to see she was making headway. Jeanette told me that on the first professional development day of the year they all made a start at developing a shared belief system. The staff had fun playing around with the notion of

'Home is where the Heart is'. They brainstormed the letters of home and came up with honour, opportunity, modeling and exploring. They revisited the rainbow theme and the staff chose rainbow buddies, that is, they each chose other staff members to work with on school wide activities planned in the year.

Something was happening. Perhaps a small turn in direction. Over 550 hamburgers had been wolfed down at a family barbecue at the beginning of September. A parent told her that the community was buzzing. Nothing like this had happened for a long time. Chairs were taken home for 'recovering' on weekends. Even children, adjusting back to the routines of school after summer holidays, experienced a different feel to the situation when they were sent to the office. There were notes about behavior written on paper adorned with a teddy bear and the word 'hugs'. Bears found their way to the assistant principal's office and to the library. She told me one of the teachers was handing out crystals to her class, just as Jeanette had done a few weeks previous at the professional development day. There were rainbows displayed around the school by various staff. *Would this year, like the freshly painted walls around us, be a new beginning?* Jeanette spoke,

Jeanette: Remember last year, you and I talked about the village. I had to abandon that as a practical idea. It still is one that I have in my head but it wasn't going to be the one that could spill over.

Pam: Not at this time.

Jeanette: And yet what's interesting in choosing–you know we did the hands–so hands are still there. Then the other thing, deciding that the rainbow was going to be our story this year, to see down the pod where Kerry's room is–that there are five rainbow trees, one for each classroom, and the kids have made some rainbows, and in the library there are paper rainbows, so the rainbows are starting to get picked up, and it's a bit faster than the bears…I think again the primary people maybe have been waiting, like The lotus seed (Garland, 1993)–that's not unfamiliar territory in their hearts. But they've been waiting for someone to support that story. (taped conversation, October 9, 1998)

It was good to be reminded through these displays and small acts that Jeanette's presence was being felt by some staff in the 'out of classroom' places–the hallways, library and staff room. *The feel of these places was starting to change*. But it was a challenge. Jeanette wished she could be out there more but she said it was hard to get out of the office. Things were always popping up and she was not yet sure how they might be handled. She said it was easier to catch things before a potential problem arose rather than after it had 'blown up'. She needed to be everywhere at once. Like a leaking dike, she had to be ready for every possible crack. Things could erupt so easily.

Trying to change the tone was all consuming. If she stayed too long in her office place she would miss the little things that could so easily spoil her efforts. Negative signs, for example, directing what 'not to do' would suddenly spring up in the hallways, the front entrance and the 'out of classroom places' where children gathered. Jeanette said attempts like these, although meant to be helpful, were often giving subtle messages of 'a glass half empty rather than a glass half full'.

It took so much energy to project an upbeat tone but Jeanette worked at it. She wanted staff to dream, to risk, to create a new story with her. It was challenging enough but then there were the calls from other places. In mid September, she was asked to take a teacher returning from 'stress leave'. She told me about it as we drove in her car to pick up Bruce from school. He was sick and needed to be taken to his grandparents' house. It was another thing on her mind.

She told me she had been on the phone downtown for over two hours. She told them she had just hired a teacher for the position–the parents and children loved him, and now she was concerned that she was supposed to replace him. On one hand, she wanted to help the teacher in difficulty. She was good at it. She had done it before, at her previous school, when things were 'in place'. But she needed to know ahead of time, so she had a chance to work with the teacher before school started, to find something the teacher could do comfortably. Now the timing was all wrong. Perhaps, in a couple of years, they could help at the school but not now.

I could see the fragility when she was trying to build a relationship with staff–I could see the temporal dimension to the situation. Jeanette was showing me her strong sense of 'meeting people where they were'. She wanted to do this for the teacher returning from stress leave, and she wanted to be met where she was too.

Along with trying to build a new story of school with staff, there were the ongoing structural changes to adapt to: changes such as teachers new to the school, teachers with new assignments and teachers with reassigned classroom spaces. As well, team planning and five 'one and two' combined classes were only beginning the second year. Staff had decided to give combined groupings 'a try' for two years to give teachers an opportunity to assess the viability. School wide activities, such as the measurement stations were another structural change about to begin. They were planned last June by teams of teachers as a response to the need to provide 'hands on' learning experiences to all the classes. Teachers felt there was merit in the idea because the shared activity would save work for them. But it was an experiment for all, like the combined groupings and team planning. It was something to try out, tentatively.

There seemed to be so much going on. The 'how to' not the 'why' kept coming to the foreground. ***How fleeting inquiry seemed in the face of all this. It would make it hard to remember, let alone develop, the shared belief system begun on the first professional development day at the beginning of the year. How distant that day might feel now to everyone, even only a few weeks ago. Teachers must have wondered if they had had a summer holiday at all.***

Paradox

I didn't need a calendar to keep track of time as weeks flew by. I only needed to look around to see the signs. Pumpkins and spooky spider webs joined the red and yellow leaves of fall that swirled throughout the school. The lizard aquarium in the library was now a tomb. Even though my visits to Jeanette's office were punctuated by phone calls, documents to sign and issues emanating from the outer office, I always felt attended to. I was amazed at how Jeanette could concentrate on our conversations in this atmosphere. Her door was never closed. Everything was always there.

I found out Jeanette never took a lunch break for herself but she always had time for children. One Friday afternoon I was there for birthday celebrations. Napkins, cookies, juice and the birthday pencils were brought to the staff room table to be handed out to the children. I joined the group and was introduced by Jeanette as a friend from the university. Each child talked about their birthday while Jeanette and I listened.

Outside at recess, children of all sizes ran quickly to hold her hands as soon as they spotted her. Children could count on a hug, a wave, a smile or a friendly comment in the hallways to add sparkle to their days. She had frequent visits from Atif, a little boy who qualified to be 'placed' in a special class. Jeanette looked out for him. She talked to him about getting to bed at a reasonable time and set up plans to help him with this. *I came to see the children as the rainbows that brightened her days.* ***It was easier with the children. Especially the younger ones. They must have seen her as herself–authentic. They could more easily build a bond with her, with no script to bar the way.***

It was not so easy with others. On a visit in late October she told me more about the confusing messages she was receiving from central office, downtown. There were evening professional development sessions, where her attendance as principal was required. At these meetings she was presented with readings from authors who talked about the need to be messy and the need to play in developing school community. She read authors who wrote that mistakes are made when risk taking. Principals were told to set the tempo and invite the players but that the music would come from something they could not direct. These were ideas that she felt comfortable with. She said, "I believe in a learning community–I believe in these things…but I don't believe…we don't get a chance to do that–we are being told what to do" (taped conversation, October 23, 1998). Although principals were assigned weekly homework, there was no follow-up. There was no time assigned to conversation about what they were reading.

The 'story' funneled through e-mails, principal sessions, meetings, memos and documents, was all about improving student achievement. There seemed little room for play–for teachers, for principals, for children. There seemed only room, only time, for telling. The range of acceptable stories was narrow. She was concerned that the statements she sent downtown, the school goals, had no numbers, for example, no percentages of children achieving benchmark passes on system tests. Her concerns were valid. She was told to redo the goals.

Jeanette talked about the need for all children to know what success felt like. This meant that children might live out their school experiences in many different ways, ways that might actively engage children in constructing knowledge. She believed school was more than being measured as academic achievement on a test. She wanted to get this message across, to downtown and to the school. *But it was difficult to show what she believed in.* There was the decision to have small classes at the primary level. There was the curricular emphasis on the arts, 'hands on' learning and support for broader, descriptive kinds of assessment. There was the interactive library, now displaying the 'I wonder' station , where walking through the shiny blue streamered entrance signified a passage to another world. But she was frustrated. The movement seemed lumbering and slow. It was not fast enough.

At least it was not fast enough movement for the 'results oriented' competitive system of which she was a part. The changes seemed imperceptible when combined with the day to day goings on and the continual structural changes taking place in the *classrooms, interrupting the flow*. It made her wonder. "Do I need to be more directive and part of me says I do–and part of me says but that's not who you are" (taped conversation, October 23, 1998). *I remembered my own experiences as a teacher-librarian and how it took almost three years to see a difference in the story of school.* ***But I had the support of my principal. I wondered where Jeanette's support came from.***

The sense of urgency seemed to make her task more difficult. She tried to make connections with central office downtown. They didn't seem to want to listen to another way of doing things. ***Jeanette as principal did not simply want to follow the plot line of resister or conformist. It was not either/or for Jeanette. She wanted to start a conversation.***

She felt the need to keep track of what she was doing, to show what she was talking about, to help her explain. She didn't know how she was going to show this 'keeping track' but it became a dominant focus to our conversations. She said,

> I'm thinking that unless we change the measure–like what you and I talk about, unless we change the measure, unless we change what we attend to–if the measure is the important thing–so unless we change that, there's no change in practice and there's no change in making a paradigm that educates all children. (taped conversation, October 9, 1998)

Jeanette wished she had support, the leeway, to play with this notion. It would help her with the parents. But it wasn't just the parents. Many staff too were accustomed to the more business oriented outcomes approach to education. Marks on progress reports were in, comments were out. Jeanette felt she was viewed as an intrusion by some. Jeanette supported portfolio assessment for children for example, but she told me that the suggestion at a staff meeting to use portfolios was greeted by some staff members with "I'm not doing that!" (taped conversation, October 9, 1998). She was worried that perhaps some would "wait her out" (taped conversation, October 9, 1998). *The school motto 'A place to belong' was sadly ironic.*

Jeanette saw the world differently than many of those around her–staff at her school and in the larger system. She was thinking about a school where ideas are developed and meaning is created by the people who lived *in* *the school landscape. It was a counter story to ideas and meaning developed somewhere else and delivered ready-made through the conduit down* *onto* *the landscape.* ***Jeanette's 'story to live by' did not fit with prevailing ideology of the time.***

I knew she often felt alone. It was the children, her own and those in the school, that brought her joy. In early November, when I walked into her office, I found her quietly cutting Bruce's school photo to fit the pewter teddy bear frame on her desk. "That's beautiful, Jeanette," I said (field note, November 6, 1998). Outside the door I could hear the excitement in children's voices at the measurement stations in the hallways. Children, gathered in clusters, were pouring canisters of beans into different volume containers. They were comparing their weights to stacks of books. They were stretched out on the carpets measuring each other. They were having fun with their predictions. It was testament to something different happening in the school. Teachers and students came to the 'out of classroom places', the hallways, pits, library and gym. Jeanette liked to see this. These were the places a new story of school was being whispered, with hands and hearts, rainbows and teddy bears. These were places that Jeanette's presence was being felt.

Seeing the children gave her cause to hope–to sustain the rainbow image in her heart. She spoke to me again about the image.

> The rainbow for me symbolizes strong individuals that are not as powerful without blending the colours. Each colour of the rainbow can stand on its own and is significant on its own but if you blend the colours it's truly magical and a gift…we need to be strong–we need to support one another–and we need to blend at the edges to have that fluency–that flow. (taped conversation, November 6, 1998)

She said everyone sees a different rainbow because no two people view it from the exact same place. If these views were shared, they would create a richer understanding because it acknowledged multiple rather than single perspectives. For Jeanette it meant everyone was responsible for what they see and for bringing it as a contribution to the community.

Jeanette's rainbow community image was different from the image delivered at mandated professional development sessions for principals. Principals, at very different places in their careers, were given 'one size fits all' processes to work with staff to create similar foundations. She wondered how it could work because "I don't bring the same set of experiences to this as a first year principal" (taped conversation, November 6, 1998). As well, the sessions interrupted family time at home. On evenings when she was required to attend such sessions, she was not able to do with Bruce the things she talked to parents about as being important.

On one of my visits that fall, I met Rhonda, who knew Jeanette from teaching together many years ago. She dropped by to visit the library and to visit with Jeanette. She plopped herself down in a chair beside Jeanette and me. They laughed about old times; Jeanette in pigtails, skateboarding down the hallways, Rhonda thinking she was one of the children. Back then, Jeanette was a rising star, one of the youngest consultants ever appointed to a principalship in this particular school system. She has been a principal for many years. Now, in her office, Jeanette was looking at the goal statements which she had to redo.

I listened as she began to retell the story of her wishes and intentions for the school. She talked again about the need for more 'hands on' learning, more active engagement, especially for boys. I thought about Bruce. Almost in the same breath she told Rhonda and me that the week had been terrible. Jeanette's intentions for the school and her lived experiences were such a contrast. Soon I would hear about the 'latest awful thing'.

Jeanette was upset. A book was circulating in the community. It was written to help parents 'get what they wanted' for their child. It was against child centred learning and for 'back to the basics'. It had not been written by an educator, but by someone who 'knew' schools. She expected to hear about it at a parent meeting but not a word was mentioned. No-one wanted to talk about the book. This made it all the more upsetting to Jeanette. The experience Jeanette was living, the book story, was so contrary to the imagined story of school Jeanette had shared with Rhonda and I only a few minutes earlier.

Rhonda walked out the door to the library and we were left alone. Both of us were thinking about the contradictions. Rhonda's visit brought them to light. The way things were then and the way things were now. We talked about changing times. I wondered aloud about losing your vision in times you found difficult. *I was thinking about Jeanette. It was hard to do what she believed in. The landscape she encountered at the school and in the system as a whole was wearing her down.*

Jeanette: You don't lose your vision but it becomes more ethereal–more see through–less sustaining.

Pam: Hmm, hmm.

Jeanette: It's there, there on the edge of your consciousness and it makes you feel guilty and it makes you feel frustrated and it makes you feel that there is something out there but it doesn't sustain you to get there. I think this is happening to me–my vision hasn't changed but it's getting see through because I can't sustain it–and because I can't sustain it it's bogged down in the crisis of event after event. But then it doesn't sustain me either. I can't sustain it and it can't sustain me.

Pam: Hmm, hmm.

Jeanette: And that's sad–and as resources get shorter–tighter–you cut away what is supporting you and so you get caught in the reality of dealing with the crisis of the moment–day after day–and you never get to that moment of play, never get to that moment of sitting down and reflecting–of working

> with people to achieve something else–you just maintain the status quo. (taped conversation, November 6, 1998)

I could not bear to hear her talk about her 'story to live by' in this way. She needed to ground the images she cherished in her practice. To make them strong, to make them grow. But what if she couldn't ? What happens then?

Working Around the Edges

As November passed, the teddy bears in the outer office began to sport red Santa caps. White cotton wool–snow settled on bookshelves, tying things together for a holiday theme. More reds and greens would make their way into the displays, week by week. *It was an unusual way to do displays I thought. They weren't replaced so much as they evolved over time. It crossed my mind that the person doing these displays was a friend of Jeanette's. She had worked with her at a previous time.* When I arrived that day, in late November, I sat in my usual chair where I could see through to Jeanette and also make small talk with the office staff. Hillary was in high spirits. She was kind of a jack of all trades–working in the library, in the office, in other school places. Today she was wearing 'taxi driver hat' as she zipped Bruce over to his school. Some people wondered.

As the winter days darkened around us, Jeanette spoke of bright spots, reflecting new beginnings. She told me she was pleased about the measurement stations. She said they were something to build on. She thought that the three part 'celebration of learning' down in the primaries was already shifting the story of school. Marks were being phased out in favour of comments as these children progressed through the school. She said she saw glimpses of a new story here and there but that change took a long time. She wanted a shared vision of school. She did not want to 'define the vision' but wanted a story created by staff. It would be a story never seen before. *It would evolve.* ***An evolving change would take much longer, participation would be involved, but first it must feel safe. Jeanette was trying to do this. She was trying to change the tone.***

I was beginning to see how Jeanette was working around situations. Staff meetings still did not work. Expectations continued that she was to tell staff what to do and that meant issuing the latest rules and policies. Staff meetings would mean 'administrivia'. They were not a place for conversations. She began to improvise. She would have conversations when and where she could. She would use the opportunities when people came to her with questions. She used these snippets of time to softly tell her story. She wished people would come to her more often. She told me many staff wanted to be left alone to teach in their classrooms. Nevertheless, she worked with those who came.

Like the silent messengers, the hearts, teddy bears and rainbow images, I came to see her conversations with staff in her office as a subtle way to get her story out there. She had no intentions to impose. She invited.

She told me her job was to respond and honour the ideas and beliefs of individual teachers but to also share her own. I remembered how a month ago she shared an example of what she meant. A teacher told her she wanted to exempt many children from some mandated testing. Diagnostic testing was considered acceptable in the teacher's eyes because it was used for programming, not for rating children. Jeanette asked the teacher to consider how the mandated testing might be used. I listened as I always did, responsively. *I thought how this listening enabled her to retell the story. I wondered if this was how I was helping her, by 'just listening' as I had last June. Although small, this too was a responsive community, like me and my sister, like Karin and her teacher friend.* She continued with her story as she retold for me.

Jeanette: If our stand is going to be we don't want standardized testing–it's not aligned to our curriculum or the way we teach kids–then we can't just turn around and use a test of our own choosing–so we have to be clear for what our intention is and what we believe is best for our kids and try to create circumstances.

Pam: But frame it all within diagnostic–there's nothing wrong with any of it.

Jeanette: Maybe the kids to exempt are the ones that you know what they're doing–the problem is…they (mandated tests) are an end point not a beginning…so then it becomes what the information is used for. I can't argue with the fact that we do need to test kids because we need to program…so we need to be proactive in what measures would we use to show kids are learning and growing. (taped conversation, October 23, 1998)

Using books was another way to invite conversation or keep it going. They were always 'at hand' for Jeanette in her office space. Often it was children's literature but this day she pulled off a book by Max De Pree called Leading without power: Finding hope in serving community (1997). She had several others by this same author filed away. She shared the book with me. She quoted phrases like "work linked to moral purpose" (p. 179) and "the gift of challenging work" (p. 14). I was struck by Jeanette's choice to quote, "We need to learn how to measure what's significant, how to measure matters of the spirit" (p. 16). Jeanette liked De Pree's idea that 'very skilled' was not enough: skills in building relationship are needed.

It reminded me of why I liked doing research projects with children. For me it was the hand with the heart. De Pree wrote that exceptional organizations are those that move with a common understanding that the future can be created, not simply experienced. This was what Jeanette wanted at the school. But if it was to be authentic, not a cover story, she could not direct the story. Like a creation story, it must emerge from the landscape. She felt she was working towards this. She explained.

Jeanette: What I have done is very slowly and very subtly change the expectations–I haven't taken away the list of rules–I've just not reinforced them–I've just stopped providing bathroom passes–but that didn't go unnoticed…and you know with the heritage (museum) school, I haven't said this school will do this, but I have said this might be worthwhile doing…and it hasn't been directive.

Pam: It's not abrupt–it's almost taking what is, and widening–whatever little river is going along is being widened–seems more like evolving.

Jeanette: I look at the kids integrated into classrooms. I haven't stated my belief that I want the school to become a place where all kids can function at their level–I haven't said that–but nor have I said we're going to work hard to get this kid into a special class unless I really felt that was the best choice…because what I've done is 'you tell me'–'I'm not going to tell you'.

Pam: But that's a big message.

Jeanette: And they've been used to dramatic change and so they're gun shy and now the change is still there, still happening in much more subtle ways and they can't put their finger on why they are so tired–but I haven't been that direct.

Pam: But it's probably hard–and you're used to being told–do it this way–that way.

Jeanette: Cause you don't have to think.

Pam: It's harder, you have to go to that deeper level.

Jeanette: And that's why the communication thing–why we're struggling–because if you don't have to think you don't have to communicate. (taped conversation, December 4, 1998)

That was the dilemma for Jeanette. After years of 'being told', how difficult it would be to feel comfortable engaging in dialogue in the 'out of classroom place'. It had not been a place to venture out. I remembered a conversation early in October. Jeanette told me about a meeting downtown. Principals were told to free up staff, to "remove the barriers" so they could move (taped conversation, October 9, 1998). *It occurred to me that when you open a door, not every bird wants to fly out.*

There always seemed to be so much to talk about. On one level, there was 'the latest awful thing', on another there were the ideas, hopes and dreams Jeanette had for education and the school. Our talk was never shielded from the daily 'goings on'. Jeanette always made herself available and staff were becoming more and more comfortable barging in while she and I were in conversation. This was a sign of the way her inviting 'out of classroom' office space was becoming a safe place on the school landscape. On this day, Kerry popped in with some famous quotations on cards to show Jeanette.

As we looked at them together, we chuckled. It was another patch of light. "No matter how old her children are–a mother still hopes for improvement." We laughed. Jeanette wanted to keep some of them. Kerry asked if she would get them back. Jeanette answered, "how good am I at doing what I'm told!" We had fun with these. "Adopt the pace of nature–her secret is patience". Jeanette was musing, "I used to think that I was a patient person–I've decided that I'm not at all!" (December 4, 1998, field note). Kerry thought she could put them in people's mailboxes. Jeanette thought it a fine idea, and suggested she add some notebooks and some candies.

Kaleidoscope

Since the beginning of the school year I had been taking photos of the changing physical landscape of school: pictures of Jeanette's teddy bear office, the inukshuk, the banner, hearts and rainbow displays. I brought my photo album to school this trip in early December. *I began to wonder, as time went on, if the photos were for me or for her. At first the photos seemed to be a record of changes to the school landscape since Jeanette arrived. But I was struck by her words that her story was becoming 'see through' and it made me see the photos differently–maybe they were triggers to bring back the images she believed in.*

Jeanette began collecting pictures. Her first album looked at landscape things: the inukshuk in the outer office, the rainbow in the staff room. Her second album showed some of the things that were happening in the school with children, changes in practice as a result of the new direction set in the first year, pictures of the interactive library, of the measurement stations, of the smaller classes at the primary level. The third album focused on the teaching staff and some of the structural changes taking place: the two new morning kindergarten teachers, a teacher who had moved classrooms. She wanted to be able to talk about the interruptions to the flow, to give context to why things were not happening quickly. She said,

> Jeanette: It's hard to measure–I've a hard time tracking things–actually stopping the moment. That's why I think these are important because there's a way of stopping the moment to then talk about it.
>
> Pam: It foregrounds stuff that keeps getting pushed into the background.
>
> Jeanette: The daily events–the crisis of day to day–yesterday was one of them…(an incident) I started my Monday morning talking to a class about death…that context…you lose this unless you have a way of capturing it–my mind by Monday will go away from this and what will stick is how to talk to kids about an uncle's death.
>
> Pam: Can I take some of these? I need some more to show these changes. I'm thinking in terms of the triggers–to remember–the native people–so how do you keep track–the ceremonies and rituals–to keep the ability to attend in the face of constant stuff.
>
> Jeanette: I need to be able to say–this is what I want to measure–not how to measure–but what I want to measure.
>
> Pam: This is what's significant.
>
> Jeanette: Yeah–and I also need to say that this is what I want whether it's one year, two years, or ten years… not necessarily to understand it but to say this is the kind of work I want to be involved in five years from now, ten years from now.
>
> Pam: It's where you're trying to go…so unless you have something to haul you back you can't go in and I think that happens. You can't go in ever because there's always something else coming.
>
> Jeanette: Yeah–it's hard work to go in–it's easy not to get to it, to put it away…because it's harder to do this. (taped conversation, December 4, 1998)

She told me about her concerns for staff. They were not stopping, yet a common theme at the 'one on ones' was about being tired. She thought it was because they were doing things differently but the reason for the tiredness was hard to put a finger on. There was no moment of realization. She wondered if there was a way to slow things down for them. I asked if she would be sharing the photos with some of them. She said she didn't know. She had not yet talked to staff about the inukshuk.

Reflecting on the photo album, I thought about the need to hold time still against the constant whirling of events. Bringing memories up for reflection. Wasn't this what retelling was all about? Wasn't it a way to see more, to see differently? I looked at the photo of the inukshuk. I remembered building it last year and how we decided the word 'trust' described it. It was trust and then participation. She had been full of the optimism of what might be. Now a year later she had still not been able to share it with staff. It was something to wonder about.

In late December, with the anticipation of Christmas and the winding down of the fall term, we picked up our thread of conversation in her office adorned with festive teddy bears and holiday greetings. She was concerned that "she has to keep stopping...the position is too all consuming" (taped conversation, December 18, 1998). Jeanette talked about the need to give herself space to do some writing. I soon knew why. She paused for a few moments, looked out the window and then turned to me,

> I think why I haven't hit the wall is some ability to step back, and try and not worry about things I can't at the moment do anything about–sometime it will come together–I step back to be not so emotionally engaged–it's protection–I can't be emotionally engaged yet–because it would tear me apart. (taped conversation, December 18, 1998)

She reached over to a bag on the floor. She had a present for me. It was a wooden heart with a rainbow and my name on it. She had given one to all the staff. She was not sure what they thought about them. I took the Courtney Milne book Visions of the goddess (1998) out of my bag. She was struck by some of the photographs and we enjoyed turning the pages together for a while. I think she liked it. There were many gifts upon her table.

She was interrupted off and on, mostly by staff wishing her a Merry Christmas. Each person got a warm hug from Jeanette. A student teacher dropped by to give her a candle with a teddy bear on the front. The note said "You have lit a light for me". Phones were ringing. "Ba humbug" she chortled over the phone when a friend said she wouldn't be able to get over to the school that day for the staff lunch. Atif, the little boy who needed sleep, brought her a gift. She told him she would call twice over the holidays and he was to write her three letters. Another child brought her a handmade yellow felt stocking with a teddy glued on. She was touched. "A treasure," she said (taped conversation, December 18, 1998). Teachers and support staff continued to peek their heads around the door. One teacher asked how Bruce was doing.

Jeanette's words about stepping back, not hitting the wall, did not fit with these happy exchanges. How could this be? It seemed like another contradiction. On the one hand everything was all gaiety and warmth. On the other hand she felt so separated. ***I wondered about multiple selves and how things looked different depending on the position taken. It happened to me: as a mother, as a wife, as a teacher, as a teacher-librarian, as a child–a kaleidoscope of views.***

Jeanette was already thinking about the new term in January. She wanted to run a new discipline plan by me. The idea was that when children arrived at her door, it would be a beginning, not an end point for them. She knew a few teachers were trying to think differently about discipline. If the teachers were trying to build a bridge to her, she would be there to meet them. It was another attempt at getting 'out there' to build connections–any that she could. She planned to ask children to write about their feelings, to say what they were good at, and to say what the problem was. She wanted to broaden the conversation by inviting the teacher and probably parents as well to join in.

There was no way of knowing at that time whether it might work or not. I thought back to one of 'Kerry's quotes, the one Jeanette loved, "Life is like learning to play the *violin in public". Of course it made so much sense for Jeanette. As principal she lived in the 'out of classroom place' on this school landscape. She could not hide.*

She spoke a language of hearts and rainbows, passion and commitment. To many she seemed very likeable–likable enough to follow her. But joining was a subtle difference. A little thing but a big thing. Not moving in a single line behind the leader but moving somewhere together. There could be so many more possibilities. The pattern could be infinitely richer. It was hard to know if this could happen. There is no policy to ensure trust.

CHAPTER 5: STORY PIECES

Stories of Experience–Karin–Fall 1998

The stories in this chapter centre around Karin's experience in the Fall of 1998. Karin taught a combined one and two class. This was her seventh year in the school. She was mother to two grown children. After our first meeting my impression was of a teacher who loved to learn, who loved teaching young children and who loved to take initiative. Over the course of three months spending two and one half mornings a week in her room, I would learn much more. Concurrently at this time, I spent one half morning a week with Jeanette in her office space and around the school. I spent more or less time with each of them depending on the situation. The chapter is composed of three storied themes arising from field notes, transcribed conversations, photos, artifacts and my own personal journal entries as I 'lived' with Karen and wrote later of the experience. The storied themes include Living in the 'In Classroom Place', Living With Intrusion: The 'In Classroom Place' and the 'Out of Classroom Place', and Living in the 'Out of Classroom Place'.

Living in the 'In Classroom Place'

Karin was always thinking. She reflected on children and their lives. She speculated about ideas she encountered in novels and professional reading. She imagined projects to connect children to each other and to new learning and so on. I wondered what she was thinking at our first encounter after my decision to go into her classroom as a participant observer. There were few people around when Karin and I sat down close to each other on chairs in the staff room at recess time. She wanted me to understand she had been very shy in school and she hoped she would not be too shy with me. Karin told me she had been an architectural draftsperson. Teaching was her second career. Having children turned her in this direction. She was encouraged by her whole family, although embarking on the education program for her teaching career was not easy. She traveled a long way by car each week to take her courses. She stayed with an aunt during the week in town. Then each weekend she drove home to her husband and two young children.

Karin's story shifted when she became a mother. My parent story also shifted when I became a parent of a child with severe disabilities. My teaching story shifted as I changed position from the 'in classroom place' as a primary teacher and a special needs teacher to the 'out of classroom place' as a teacher-librarian in the school.

I continued to listen to Karin's story the following week, but this time we sat in her 'garden room', a little 'bubble' attached to the classroom. It was a place where light outside the building flooded in. What struck me most was being surrounded by a panel of wallpaper flowers circling below the bank of windows on curved walls. The space was welcoming. There were two old armchair rockers covered with tapestry throws with a small round table on which sat personal knick-knacks, a homemade angel, a basket, a teapot, snacks and a few 'coffee table' books. Family photos were gathered about. "I'm looking after myself…every teacher should have this," she said (field note, October 13, 1998).

The cozy space had not always been so. This place had been transformed since Jeanette arrived. ***The boundary lines between home and school blurred in this place.*** Formerly it was used for testing or for resource programs. Karin talked about how the 'resource' children marched through her class each day. She said she had been told the place could not be used as a teacher space, not even for teacher storage. *The space, how it was to be used, was an old story of school. The place had been seen as an 'out of classroom place' and teachers had been told.*

Karin brought her life to school, not just in the garden room but in her 'in classroom place'. From that very first day I began to see how Karin's love of art was embodied in her practice. The room was brimming with materials and with tools to help children create. Children's artwork hung on every patch of wall space and spilled out into the hallways to 'out of classroom' places. I saw one of the puppet theatres she designed and sold to other teachers. I saw the oasis palm tree shelves decorated to match the various themes that occurred during the year. I also saw her painting and handiwork everywhere in the garden room. I commented on all the colour and life. My comment made her remark all the more poignant when she said that morning, that despite the arrival of the new release teacher and arts-based programming, "I won't give up my art" (field note, October 13, 1998).

Karin greeted me with a smile and 'good morning' when I walked in to class. As time went on the children too came up and wanted to show me this or that. When class began, I sat at a little round work table away from the main 'goings on' of the class. I did not want to be a distraction. Eventually I just became a part, blending in to the rhythm of classroom life. We first began to really talk in the garden room.

As we talked that day, she told me she wanted to show the children she was a whole person, with a family and a history. At the beginning of each year she reads Where does the teacher live? to the children (Feder, 1979). They have to guess where she sleeps. At the end of the book she tells the children where she lives and about her family. Her telling is an invitation for children to also tell. *She wanted to be more than a scripted role of teacher and she afforded the children the same honour.* ***She wanted to grow close to them. As I grew familiar with Karin's ways I saw that she wanted to paint a picture-story together. She wanted to build a community in her classroom where everyone could participate. She wanted to participate too, not simply direct the story from the outside. She wanted to author a story together with the children***

The story being painted on my first day in her class in mid October was that of Curious George traveling across America to Edmonton to visit them! Curious George would arrive with a suitcase he was filling as he traveled from place to place. The children could not wait. They rushed up to anyone arriving at their classroom door. The morning message time was used to track his progress. When I arrived, Karin was inventing excuses as to why he was late. The curriculum came to life as all class activities revolved around this visit. Soon the children's own stories, 'all about me', would be put onto the Curious George web site to go to other children in schools across North America. The local T.V. station would broadcast the arrival of Curious George 'live' in Karin's classroom!

Thinking about monkeys meant the class would explore the colour brown. Brown took a special place in the morning message, in the stories and in writing the children were doing. The art plan for the day was to finger paint with chocolate pudding. Brown finger paintings were transformed to create bark designs for jungle flora. It was part of a display image Karin had in mind. Eventually the children would create monkeys to sit on these vines. ***Karin was making curriculum like a painter as she selected colours from her palette to create the vivid Curious George 'painting' with the class. It was a creative act. Many months later, in a journal entry she wrote,*** "Teaching is a work of art in progress" (journal entry, June 2, 1999).

As Karin taught, I divided the pudding into small paper cups in the 'garden room'. I noted I was making much more than enough for one class. All of the five grade one and two classes must have planned this activity together I thought. As the weeks went on, I noticed the way colours played a part in various themes. White was left until last in hopes of the first snowfall in November. All the primary classes were involved in the planning and preparation of materials. They had weekly meetings Karin said.

When I took individual children to the library to listen to home reading, I noted bins of books, colour graded for different levels that primary children and their teachers shared. Later in the morning a teacher dropped in to borrow some Bill Martin fall books Karin planned to use. I wondered how the primary team experience was going.

A few days later she began to talk to me about the team experience. The topic came up as an offshoot of a conversation about the Curious George project. She had been one of four original teachers and the only teacher from Canada to get involved. A teacher from a small town in Kansas started it. Karin thought the project would fit in with social studies and language arts. Houghton Mifflin picked the project up and offered to set up a web site. I remarked that small communities often seem to capture ideas and do amazing things. "It's interesting that you said that. We're having some growing pains with the five one/twos" (field note, October 19, 1999).

She said it was often hard to plan for so many children. Resources were a problem, everyone wanted them at the same time. After a year of trying team planning Karin still had questions. *I wondered about managerial aspects and procedures. They seemed to dominate attention, perhaps because the team planning still seemed new.*

Typically when I arrived during those first October mornings, the children were spread out all over the room. Some children sprawled on the carpet, building train tracks, tunnels and slides with sticks and marbles. Other children were constructing a Lego hospital in the corner, painting at the round table, or playing games on the computer. Some children were putting puzzles together in little groups. Joining their play was an easy way to greet the children, fitting into their worlds, and the world of the classroom. Everyday began with this routine. Karin called the morning playtime 'choice time'.

When 'choice time' was over she rang a little bell and children put away their things. The children knew the routine and things generally went smoothly. One day I noticed Robert becoming upset when he had to put away his clay. Karin and I often talked to him. He was very imaginative. He had been in a lot of trouble in kindergarten she told me. He would get very involved in his activities. *I noted this because changing his activities was a difficult transition for Robert.*

Karin insisted the morning play time was called 'choice time' and not free time. She said last year she had done 'choice time' at the end of the day but the time was always rushed. Karin liked it much better this year. She encouraged children to choose an activity that would not be hurtful to others. Not hurting others was a theme that permeated her classroom. I noticed, for example, how she showed the children how to use their chalkboards responsibly. She herself was allergic. *I thought of freedom with* *responsibility. I thought of the work of Greene (1988) and of the notion of living with one another consciously.*

Another daily routine that struck me was snack time. The desks were configured in groups of four, making a space like a large table. The desks were positioned so that each child could see the board. Children were given the time to sit and talk in quiet conversation instead of taking their snacks outside to recess. It was something new she tried this year. It provided an opportunity to talk and share stories with each other.

A more formal 'Show and Share' often followed this routine. The children always gestured their approval "Yes!" when this happened. They listened raptly to each other. I noticed, too, how enthralled they were whenever Karin talked about her family, like the day she told the children her parents had been married for over fifty years. The children had so many questions. They wanted to know more.

Snack time was a ritual in Karin's room which drew the children's attention to each other and to her. In sharing stories they became closer to each other. Karin was helping to set a tone in the classroom that meant all children were valued and honoured for who they were. ***To me it was a morally significant act that she was able to express in her practice in her 'in classroom place'.***

After three weeks I, too, was fitting into the routines. I sat quietly at the back of the room at my small table, colouring, cutting, doing whatever would be helpful. All the while I listened and watched, occasionally jotting down notes. Curious George continued to dominate classroom life. Children graphed their favourite restaurants to put into the big book they were making to travel with George. These would be the places they would take him out for dinner. I looked forward each day to helping children with their writing. Karin appreciated my contribution. "Writing is such an individual thing," she said and "it's hard for me to get to all of them" (field note, October 21, 1998).

During writing time I got up from my table and walked around the room with Karin, crouching down to visit individual children on my way. Eyes lit up as we imagined

Curious George riding airplanes at the local amusement park. The engagement would spur them on. Karin and I talked about the children's work later after they left class for lunch. We agreed. There was a huge range in writing ability. Some children wrote paragraph stories and others copied down words printed around the room. *The open ended activity allowed all children to feel success. Even those children that barely knew the steps could participate.* ***No one could fail because there was no competition. This 'in classroom place' was a safe place to take risks and improvise. Everyone contributed in their own way. I wondered how attention could be broadened or narrowed by the range of children in the class.***

As November grew near, I learned more of Karin's story. We found we had a common interest in journal writing. She talked about the many famous women who used their journals to explore who they were. She said she wanted to do this too. She thought this writing might be good for children. Her idea about journal writing with children might be something to explore if she could take a sabbatical for graduate studies next year. She said she wasn't interested in administration but wanted something "fulfilling for me" (field note October 21, 1998).

Woven through our conversations in the 'garden room' were personal stories. I talked about my experiences in the Maritimes. She shared stories around her interests in arts and crafts. She apologized for telling me stories she thought were 'off topic'. One of these was the story of her grandmother. *I did not think of these as off topic. Hearing her stories was like viewing Karin up close in the classroom and then at a distance. The two perspectives, the present experience and parts of her narrative history, gave me more insight to know the richness. It was just as I listened to Jeanette tell stories of her missionary aunt in Africa long ago, stories of her former school and stories of her little boy who had been so sick when he was born.*

Karin's grandmother left Denmark because her father wanted her to give up school, to stay home and to attend the dairy farm. She 'ran away from home' to a farm in

Saskatchewan. She had fourteen children altogether. When the youngest, Karin's mother, was only two months old her husband died. She was left to get the crops in so the children would not go hungry. She did not even know how to drive a tractor. All but two children went to college. Her grandma even bought a house in the next town so the older children could attend high school. *I saw, through this story, the importance Karin gave to education, as a way to restory a life. I thought the story fitted with her self-reliant ways.*

The following week there was great excitement when the children crowded into the room from recess. Snow! Newly purchased trendy purple snowsuits were given their first coating. There were snowmen and snow forts and the inevitable snowballs that morning. Karin talked to them about snowballs. She asked the children "to think of ways to make the problem go away" (field note, November 2, 1998). She invited their response. The children waved their hands with their ideas. *I was learning to pay attention. She did not want to tell the children not to do this. She did not want to give them a rule. She wanted them to think about it. It was another moment to see how she was expressing her 'story to live by' in her practice.* ***It was the 'in classroom place' where this was happening.***

I was struck by the difference in perspective I had, by being positioned in Karin's 'in classroom place' and the 'out of classroom place' of the principal. ***Both places were part of the school. It was the same world but being up close with Karin and being at a distance from Jeanette seemed to make them feel so different. I no longer felt Jeanette's presence when I could not hear her voice, her voice in conversation.***

Living With Intrusion: The 'In Classroom Place' and 'The Out of Classroom Place'

As the world outside turned white with the first snowfall, November became more colourful inside the school. I noted the reds and blues and yellows of the rainbow streamers in the doorways of the classroom next to Karin's. Rainbows were everywhere. They appeared in the morning message and on the walls and covers of the children's 'All about Me' books. We quickly left all this that morning in early November as it was

Karin's extended prep time and she wanted some time to talk. We went into the garden room and she invited me to talk while she rummaged in her desk to find the rainbow song to give to Gwen, her teacher friend next door. I was grateful for the time she gave me even when she was tired. She had driven miles on the weekend to help her sister move.

I asked her about all the year one/two classes. She said, for her, it was the second year with a one and two combined. Jeanette and the primary teachers decided to give it a try because of the way the numbers of children came in. There was a lot of scrambling the first week. It meant changing themes and big changes to long term plans. "They were still trying it out," she said (field note, November 9, 1998).

In the course of telling me about this, she told me about all the principals there had been at the school. Jeanette was the fifth in the seven years Karin had been there. She said after a while, the staff became "defensive", retreating to their classrooms and not sharing as much. Each principal seemed to have a certain "thing" and staff ended up in their rooms just "doing their own thing" (field note, November 9, 1998). I replied that perhaps with all the changes teachers did not want to get too involved or be attached. *I was learning about an old story of school–narrative history to give me insight. Learning about the history of the school helped me interpret teachers' actions in the 'out of classroom places'. Old stories of school were still having influence.* ***Perhaps they were not so old after all. Carr (1986) suggests the past is with us all the time and it 'figures in' to present knowing.***

As we walked down to the staff room to get coffee, I commented on the rainbows. I saw them in the 'out of classroom places', the hallway walls, the library and office spaces. She said they were a theme. This year they connected to staff because of the primary science unit on colour. The 'rainbow' theme worked better than the 'hands' theme from the year before she said. *I noted the hand prints that decorated the 'pits' seating areas in the primary hallway and the area above a drinking fountain. The hand prints were multi coloured. They were like the ones on the poster in the front entranceway*

Jeanette put up a year ago. The poster said the many coloured hands are connected with the same heart.

Karin said it was hard to know how the rainbow theme got started in the school. She used it in the past for curricular reasons, for teaching children about colours. She liked the idea that she could not put her finger on how the theme got started. She said the theme had "evolved". She told me that, as a staff, they talked about rainbows on the first professional development day of this year. Jeanette read a book about rainbows. Karin thought "the kernel" began last spring. There was talk of "sprucing up" a school wall because there was a lot of graffiti. She asked her daughter's friend if she would create a rainbow on the wall. Karin felt most of the staff were involved, but "at the level of fixing up the wall" (field note, November 9, 1998).

The rainbow theme came to the fore with the staff room rainbow, a rainbow made by some staff in the school for the September opening. I looked at the staff room rainbow now. It stood out. Looking around at the staff room walls I noticed an absence of the typical fare of lists, procedures, documents, and memos seen in many staff rooms I had been in. *I saw how a different image was foregrounded in this 'out of classroom place'.* The rainbow was made of layers of coloured tissue arched over an entire wall. The names of rainbow buddies had been attached to each colour on teddy bear cutouts.

As we sat together on the couch with our coffee, Jeanette appeared. Since we were talking about it, Karin asked her how the "rainbow thing" started. Jeanette talked about fluidity, "bits and pieces" that came together (field note, November 9, 1998). *How like the notion of 'evolve' I thought. I thought how evolve must seem so different than the notion of 'replace'.* ***Evolve seems to be a change that moves. Replace seems to be a change that implies a fixed position.***

I asked Karin about her 'Open House' coming up at the end of November. I saw the announcement on the billboard sign outside the school. It was always up to date. She told me she likes a three part evaluation starting with an 'Open House' where children show parents around the classroom. Karin wanted parents to get a fuller picture of the school life their children participated in. She put an agenda of a typical day on the board. The next thing she did was give out report cards. Lastly she had interviews with parents. She told me all the primary teachers did it, although the three part evaluation is a lot of work, they value it.

She said the idea evolved from a celebration of learning that she did at another school. The first celebration of learning was a student led conference with parents, child and herself all present. When she moved to this school, the principal at the time liked the idea and wanted everyone to do it. Last year, she did some reading and talking with Gwen. They decided the celebration of learning would be better if she was not present. She thought the interaction would not be as honest. Now she stays in the background while four or five parents tour with their children, taking more time and stopping at things that interest them.

In conversation with her teacher friend, the 'Open House' was evolving. I thought about a responsive community. Gwen and Karin's support for each other seemed to make it safe enough to improvise. Continuing possibilities for the 'Open House' lay on the horizon. ***The dialogue was open ended–the conditions for ongoing care about the situation could develop. It was the moral dialogue that Noddings (1993) talks about.***

Thinking about the 'Open House' led Karin to the topic of reporting. In previous years, the process was dictated. As with the 'bubble room' attached to Karin's classroom, teachers were told. Evaluation had been a very big thing she said. One year there were three different report cards used in the school. Teachers took "flack" from parents. She said her reporting is quite narrative. She did not believe young children should receive marks. "It's developmental" (field note, November 9, 1998). She worried that young children would associate letter grades with how a teacher felt about them and a 'C' would simply mean the teacher did not care. *Her 'story to live by' was rubbing up against the 'sacred' stories of achievement and evaluation prevalent at the time.*

Now it was different–Jeanette was different. She said Jeanette was not "into reporting" the same way. She did not think there were many principals like her. "She lets us be autonomous" (field note, November 9, 1998). This appealed to Karin because she felt that if report cards went out in October, children and teachers lost three good weeks of learning. She said now teachers have their primary team meetings and decide the dates. They did not have to check with Jeanette. *Karin felt safe with Jeanette.*

The rhythm picked up. As November sped by, the surge towards report cards was felt in the rush to hear children read individually, to count the words they wrote in a writing sample, to finish their clay baked animals for their jungle dioramas, and to create their 'all about me' magazines. There was the setting up of measurement stations, a farewell celebration for the student teacher in the room, the November newsletter to be typed on the primary typewriter, the three part celebration of learning to be planned and prepared for–along with the regular to do's of daily classroom life.

What did Karin say about wanting to step back? Karin was immersed. But still she managed to talk to me and to do some inventing with her teacher friend Gwen. For example, the children had explored colour all fall. As scientists they sorted coloured paper for transparency. They combined primary colours using food colouring and coffee filters to make the rainbow colours consistent with the school theme. Combining ideas to construct her themed approach made learning fun for everyone.

Today, November 20, was 'test day'. While the children sat expectantly at their desks, we put out paint with droppers, styrofoam palettes and Q-tips for mixing. Only primary colours were used. There was no purple, green or orange. Karin's idea was that they would have to apply what they learned about colour to paint self portraits. She said that this, in essence, was a test. She was pleased with the idea. Just as we were about to start, Gwen walked in from next door and said, with a huge grin, she and Karin had just come up with this test idea. The children did a wonderful job. All the paper was painted. The portraits showed the flesh colours the children created with their colour knowledge.

Karin and Gwen were improvising to meet requirements. The testing was mandated but how it was done allowed a space for each of their own stories to be expressed.

The next day Karin invited me into the garden room to see the children's portraits again. We talked about children who did well at academics not doing as well with the painting. Others, like Jody shone in this activity. Some, like Jon's, were caricatures. Robert had not wanted to do a portrait and painted a train instead. *I thought this performance assessment told a broader story of who these children were. It resonated for me as I recalled projects children created to embody their knowing in research project work.*

Puzzling through the stack of children's paintings, Karin, who loves painting herself, started talking to me about her interest in multiple literacy for children. She talked about a grade five teacher she knew well. She said the children in that teacher's class had not done any painting since grade two because painting was too messy. The teachers decision not to do painting in grade five caused her to wonder. She wondered if multiple literacy might be something to explore in graduate work. She said she needed to step back, to learn as well as to teach. *I thought about how reflecting in conversation or in journals is stepping back. Reflecting was part of her practice but there is more time to reflect away from school. School is a place where, not only is there no time, but what time there is seems speeded up.* ***The mandated curriculum for classrooms funneled into schools via the conduit keeps everybody busy. There is no time to play, no time to have a conversation, no time to think. There is so much curriculum 'to cover'. It is someone else's agenda.***

We agreed the multiple literacy idea seemed to allow for a much broader representation of expression. Perhaps this notion triggered her talk about a book circulating amongst some parents of children in her class. When a parent alerted her to the book she said she felt "struck to the core" (field note, November 23, 1998) because the circulation was happening behind her back. The book, she said, advocated a narrow view of education reflecting teacher control in the learning situation. She thought only a small group of parents supported the author's point of view, but they were trying to change what happened in the school for everyone. A parent alerted Karin. Karin decided she would warn Jeanette. She wanted Jeanette alerted to what she might be up against. She stuffed a copy of the book inside her bag. "I'm a trusting person. It really hurts," she said with tears in her eyes (field note, November 23, 1998).

During the extended preparation times, we talked but I also offered to help in any way I could. On this day in late November, I did some sight word checking Karin needed for upcoming reports. Later that morning, in the garden room, she showed me what the report cards looked like. One side was anecdotal with comments for each subject. The other side left space to say where the child fit in relation to the mandated curriculum. She told me again about the huge emphasis on testing she experienced as a teacher at the school over the last seven years. She talked about the professional development time given to discussion of testing. These discussions "drove me crazy," she said. She talked about "the lambs getting thin…not much fat on them… no time to give them anything… just test them" (field note November 23, 1998). *I recognized the plot line to this story. It had the qualities of a 'sacred story', immersing the landscape of school so fully it drowned out the voices that would question.*

Her three part open house evaluation was so different. She wanted her children to tell their own stories. On the first day, she invited parents to listen to their children, not to her. She said she learned a huge amount this way. She also asked the parents to reflect. She told me she did not want "How is 'Johnny' doing?" (field note, November 23, 1998). She wanted parents to figure out how their child was doing. *I saw how this was similar to Jeanette who wanted people to think and to be responsible, not just be told. There were other things that seemed philosophically aligned between Karin and Jeanette–beliefs in holistic, open ended approaches, and performance based assessment for example. Karin was safe, supported by Jeanette, to author stories of practice in her classroom.*

Karin's face lit up as she spoke passionately about her beliefs in restitution. She told me restitution was a kind of value system based in ideas of community. She said the children in her class developed a set of beliefs to live by rather than rules. For example, the word 'together' was used as an acronym as children brainstormed words and phrases to show what working together would look like. The chart was posted on the front board so everyone could see. She said the brainstorming activity involved a lot of talking about five essential needs: the need for survival, for freedom, for belonging, for love and for the feeling of success. She told me that, with restitution, children themselves are responsible for figuring out how to solve a problem in a way that ensures essential needs are met. It was not easy but she felt that, with continual revisiting, restitution was beginning to work in the classroom.

Outside on the playground was quite a different story she said. Her children often received mixed messages because not everybody was speaking "the same language" (field note, November 23, 1998). The issue was huge because learning another language involved other children, parents, and teachers in the school. Karin told me she and Gwen had been able to go to an institute last year. She brought the speaker back for a professional development day but "It hasn't gone over entirely with staff. Some people still want rules and consequences" (field note, November 23, 1998).

As the years went by, and principals came and went, the language of rules and procedures seemed to dominate the 'out of classroom' place. As Karin ventured 'out there' with her beliefs about restitution she came up against this language. She needed to 'get out there' because her children were affected in the 'out of classroom places' like the hallways and the playgrounds. Like Jeanette, she was having difficulty extending her 'story to live by' to the 'out of classroom place'. I thought back to Jeanette's comments about the silence that greeted her in staff meetings. How difficult it would be to figure out what restitution was all about without conversation.

When I came by later that day to help Karin prepare for her 'Open House', I knew she wanted the children to remember this celebration. She had rainbow pencils and a pot of gold filled with candies. The 'me magazines' were set up in store-rack fashion. As well as displays of children's work, she had two little tables. One was for goal setting, the other for parents to write their reflections of their children's work and program. Karin had stayed up late the night before writing goals for the children. It was important to her to accompany the goals with individualized and positive statements. After she wrote one goal, parents and the child would each write one.

I was struck by the positive model she set. At the reflection table, parents had to write for as long as it took for a hard candy to dissolve in their child's mouth. I busied myself with putting children's photos in the hallway. I used coloured paper to set them off and to go with the "We are a Rainbow' classroom motif. Karin wanted to make the celebration of learning special for the children, like the 'after theatre' party she had for them the day before. She told me that when the children, dressed in their best clothes, returned from the play, they entered their classroom 'restaurant'. It was complete with dimmed lights, flowers, candles and special serviettes for lunch. "The children would always remember this," I said. "I hope so," she answered (field note, November 25, 1998).

Now she wondered if I thought the Curious George computer display was good enough. She worried the computer display might look a bit bare because the computer was where the 'real' Curious George sat on his visit to the classroom. The 'real' one had already left on his travels through North America. We could have substituted another Curious George. There were plenty over in the oasis tree. However, we both decided to leave the computer display the way it was. Not putting another Curious George in place of the 'real' one who left would honour the story I thought. "What a difference when you look through a child's eyes," she said (field note, November 25, 1998).

Looking from another perspective made all the difference in the world. How thoughtless of the children's world we could have been. How easy to break the story thread between their world and ours.

Living in the 'Out of Classroom Place'

Karin honoured children and valued their unique contributions. She hoped her team of teachers could work together in a similar way. She did not let on at first but soon I found out Karin was upset the evening of the 'Open House' in November. She wanted to do something differently from the original team plan, decided upon earlier in meetings. She said she was a spontaneous person and she felt being on a team should not mean everyone has to do the same thing. She valued difference, for her children and for herself. "We don't expect children to be the same or try to mold them into one form so why should teachers have to be that way?" (field note, November 25, 1998). She talked about the need for time to figure out the "team thing". She talked about the need in schools for talk and for the need to visit with on another. "Giving teachers time for conversation and visiting would cost money but it would be a learning thing" (field note, Nov 25, 1998).

Working in teams was causing Karin tension with her own story to value difference. ***Buber (1947) talked about a group of people. He said that a collective faces one direction giving rise to a common way of doing everything–conformity and sameness. In contrast, a community is where there is a turning towards each other, particularities are given presence. I thought the way you interpreted 'team' could make all the difference. As with Karin's and my conversation about the children and the Curious George display for the 'open house' celebration of learning, interpretation depended on what you were attending to; a person with a 'story to live by' or a system with demands for standardization and performance.***

The day after the 'Open House' celebration, Karin was tired. She let the children have an extended choice time. We trundled off to the gym with the children to work at some of the measurement stations, devised the previous June by one team of teachers. They were one of the school-wide activities to express 'out of classroom' and 'hands on' learning. Jeanette asked the staff to work on teams to plan and implement these stations. Half the gym was closed. Three 'stations' were set up. The first one involved large standing scales. The children made predictions and comparisons amongst the weight of classmates and various piles of books. They all wanted turns.

We divided the children into two smaller groups for the other stations. My group had to develop the idea of a fair test using water, carrots, containers, and a small scale. The children had to write their predictions. I noticed how they could not read many of the instructions. They had difficulty writing the words. I had them draw pictures. Karin asked me to imagine how this might be done independently by young children. She had questions about the design of these stations. Karin had not had input into some of the design choices made for her young children. *It was a contrast to the way she was able to live her stories of practice in the classroom, where she authored curriculum designs to suit her children.*

I thought about her practice more the next day as I stapled together paper suitcases for the children's Mexico trip, part of the social studies curriculum. I sat at my round table at the back of the classroom and the children were behind a screen sitting on the carpet with Karin. They brainstormed the needs of people while Karin categorized these on a chart. Children waved their hands to talk about the need to be loved, to belong, to be free. I noticed how these needs, as well as the more typical food and shelter kinds of survival needs, were being grouped by Karin. I recognized her commitment to restitution. It was another opportunity for Karin to revisit 'the needs' with the children. The five needs on which the class belief system were based were incorporated into this social studies activity. She improvised a way to do this. *I saw it as her 'story to live by' gaining expression in her practice.*

After the activity, as children worked at their tables, I brought up Karin's beliefs in restitution. She laughed and said "I don't want to be preachy but…" (field note, November 30, 1998). Karin was passionate about the ideas around restitution. She had tried to figure out how to get ideas across to the children. She used pictures to go with each need, such as a butterfly for freedom, a heart for love and belonging, a balloon for fun and a star for success. *The use of symbols reminded me of Jeanette and the symbols of heart and hands and rainbows.* ***Using symbols was a subtle way to send a message. Using symbols was an artful way, round about, rather than direct.***

At lunch time, in the 'garden room', hours later she told me more. She mentioned she first read about restitution three years ago. Before then, she had done all the teacher effectiveness, the rewards and 'stickies'. She said these approaches to discipline were so external. She thought there must be something else. She did not think she would ever come across a principal who would let her "go with this" because her experience was that principals were more rule oriented. Restitution was based upon beliefs. But not everyone believed in restitution. Talking to me about some teachers' reaction to restitution she said, "They say it's good–but not really doing it," she sighed (field note, November 30, 1998). *Stories of rules and regulations remained in place.*

The following week we continued our conversation at a restaurant not far from the school. *It was an opportunity for me to get closer to the stories of her heart*. I asked her to tell me more about the garden room.

Karin: You know how demanding teaching is–and how when you put kids first and you give so much of yourself to make education fun and relate to their world, it takes a lot out of you.

Pam: A lot of emotion.

Karin: Draining–and one of the things I had journaled about for a long time was how tired I was and how I felt I didn't have time for me and I was saying to my family–I need a room of my own…and because I was journaling that–when we were given permission to use that bubble as we saw fit–

not being dictated to–I said I needed a room of my own. So that's why I did that–And I said to Gwen–I hope you don't mind. (laughing)

Pam: Gwen didn't mind?

Karin: And she didn't mind…and sometimes Gwen and I sit in the big chairs after school and talk about things and how things went and what we're going to do. (taped conversation, December 7, 1998)

She loved the garden room but that did not mean she thought a garden room should be prescribed for all. She said if a principal came in and said everyone must have a garden room, there would be a problem because "It has to come from you, otherwise," she said, "it's just false and doesn't work." (taped conversation, December 7, 1998). She was talking about the need to be a part of things, to be part of a decision to use the bubble attached to her classroom in this way. Otherwise it would only lead to cover stories–teachers saying one thing and doing another. *I thought about the way Jeanette was working in the school. She had her beliefs, 'her story to live by', but she did not impose it on others.*

Karin's concern about 'falsely imposing' ran to relationships within a school.

Karin: That's another one of those things you can't administrate at school…You are attracted to people similar to yourself. I've been very fortunate with Gwen. I have that…It's not that they are bad teachers or anything wrong with them as people–just sometimes….

Pam: It's such an important consideration if you're going to be a teacher-librarian. You have to be a fairly sensitive kind of person–team teaching–the whole relationship thing.

Karin: Like arranged marriages (laughing)–they could be devastating… I guess why Gwen and I get along so well, and my husband when we talk, I say something, she says something and we build on that. Some people say–how did you do that? Write it down–not that give and take.

Pam: It's like you're doing all the contributing–one way.

Karin: And then I'm so random and the person writes down what I said I was going to do.

Pam: And then you've changed it as you keep talking to them.

Karin: (laughing) "But you said"–but I can't be like that. (taped conversation, December 7, 1998)

Karin told me, in former years, using the 'bubble room' was forbidden. You could not hang a coat or even store a teacher box in the room. In those days she and Gwen talked in each other's classrooms. She would do what was asked of her and then do some of the things important to her in her classroom. *She did not feel safe enough to share these ideas or to talk about things in the 'out of classroom place'. Except for her close teacher friend, they remained 'secret' for the most part–only to be expressed in the 'in classroom place'. There was risk to her 'story to live by', her identity, in venturing out.*

But now, Jeanette was trying to change the tone in the 'out of classroom place', to allow teachers to feel safer, safer to play,–to create a new story of school ***with*** ***her. But changing the tone was imperceptible. Declaring the 'out of classroom place' safe was not something she could make a rule about.***

Our conversation turned once again to Karin's tension around rules for discipline rather than beliefs. "Ask Jeanette about it–it's really hard," she sighed (taped conversation, December 7, 1998). She continued.

Karin: Somebody wanted a rule at the playground. But you're out there with your class, by yourself–nobody else is there. It may be safe to play tag with some boundaries and some restrictions and teacher intervention but it's not safe during recess–so is the issue not safety (and) not the rule? No–people want this in place–no tag.

Pam: It's harder to do the other–more emotionally involving because you have to think.

Karin: And also it's a different way of approaching a child–restitution–you see someone doing something that's not safe–you don't go up and say 'It's the rule' you say 'I can see you're having fun here but do you think it's really safe at this time? Do you believe in being safe at school? Maybe what you're doing isn't safe. Fix what you're doing to make it more safe. They sort of think about it–they'll either choose to quit or modify or

> whatever and they walk away dignified and listened to. (taped conversation, December 7, 1998)

As we finished our lunch and walked back to her car, I thought *It occurred to me that rules do not evolve. When there is a need for change, rules are often replaced. It happens quickly and dramatically. There is probably a greater sense of change– 'something to put your finger on'.* ***Evolving change is slower, requiring thinking. Evolving change was change Karin was a part of. According to Karin, the evolving changes she had made in her classroom practice, changes like her shift towards restitution, the development of her celebration of learning and the school rainbow theme were not 'instant' but, rather, like a 'story to live by', happened over time.***

As the weeks drew closer to Christmas, children grew more industrious. Karin was doing a Mexican Christmas theme this year to tie in with the mandated social studies curriculum. There were many different activities. The classroom was like a beehive. I walked into the room past Bernie's mom helping children sew button eyes on wool sock monkeys. Other children threaded bright orange, thick red, and delicate angora wools on their cardboard 'looms'. A few children finished up painting their wooden candy canes with red and white tempura paint. I hung pinata bags, gaily decorated in tissue strips, across the front wall of the classroom.

Karin remarked on how happy the children were. She herself was excited to be doing these projects. She had not "done Mexico" for five years (field note, December 13, 1998). She did not like to do the same thing year after year. It was one advantage of having the children stay with her for two years she said. Having combined grades meant Karin would do a lot of 'open ended' activities. Using open ended activities was a way to accommodate differences. For example, Samantha was composing poetry around the letter 'S'. Other children were writing 'S' sentences. Tony wrote three 'S' words. All the children were engaged. We were both struck with how the student teachers we had worked with were all taking notes about this open ended approach. Thinking about multiple ages and abilities, Karin simply said "How else would you cope?" (field note, December 13, 1998).

Karin's practice of including all the children, by using open ended activities, was a way to ensure each child's developing learning needs and interests were attended to. The practice of using open ended activities in the classroom was integral to Karin's 'story to live by' enacted as a teacher.

Closed activities puts emphasis on the product, which only some children might attain. Focusing on a product would mean that the most you would see is your own reflection. If it was open ended it could evolve into something you could never imagine at the time. There was so much possibility but it required a freeing up, to let imagination in.

As the fall term ended, I walked with a firmer footing in Karin's classroom. She loved getting new ideas for her program and asked me if I could check out other grade one/twos in the city. This was "my mission," she laughed (field note, December 13, 1998). She would like that. She told me my presence in the room was helping her reflect more on what she was doing. She said that in her 'one on one' with Jeanette she mentioned ideas about change and rules and competition. Karin cared deeply about what she was doing in her practice. We talked about how different people value different things, like different cultures. "I suppose schools would all have different cultures too" she said (field note, December 13, 1998).

CHAPTER 6: STORY PIECES

Stories of Experience–Karin–Winter 1999

The stories in this chapter centre around Karin's experience in the winter of 1999. I spent two and one half mornings a week in Karin's classroom for three months. Concurrently I continued to spend time with Jeanette; one half morning a week. This chapter is composed of three storied themes drawn from field notes, transcribed conversations, photos, artifacts, and my own personal journal entries as I lived the experience with Karin and wrote later of the experience. The storied themes include Growing Together, Separated Lives, and Authoring the Story.

Growing Together

The first day back–it was snowy but not yet that cold for January. Bernie's Mom was in the classroom. A host of children were at the craft table with renewed interest in making sock monkeys. Karin typed up individual welcome back letters and placed them on each of the children's desks. The children were busy talking and playing with their friends after the holidays.

The new boy, who just moved into town with his mother, was sitting quietly, near the front. He said they were living in an apartment across the street. He said his "mom's car was crashed" and he was building a hill in the yard for sliding (field note, January 4, 1999). Karin later confided the family had been told to move to this apartment. There seemed to be confusion about his name. After a few weeks we found out he preferred Ben. There was no confusion about his school story so far. He had been unsuccessful. He 'failed' grade one and the teachers at his former school had written he hardly ever talked. *I felt an immediate affinity for Ben. I had been 'the new student' so many times in school as a child. In this study I was 'a new face' for Karin and her class. Ben's arrival was another transition situation to attend to. How would Ben fit in?*

Pulling children out of class to listen to their home reading gave me a chance to know them better. Each time we found a cozy couch to sit on, next to each other in the library. We took turns reading. I stumbled along with 'wrong' words and children corrected me with proper reading. They giggled at my mistakes. It was fun. As I ushered children back to class, I noticed Karin figuring out the outside temperature with children on the rug beside her. *There was a sense of warmth and informality in both these activities. It seemed to level the playing field. I wondered if our informal playful approaches would increase the possibilities for getting to know each other better.*

After classes that morning we did as we had become accustomed. We plunked down beside each other in the 'comfy' chairs in the garden room to continue our conversations. With the winter sunlight streaming through the windows, we noticed this informal atmosphere was helping us get to know each other too. As we sat together, long after the children were dismissed for lunch, Karin told me more.

She said it was vital children have the opportunity to get to know who they were. Karin valued the learning that took place in 'choice time'. She thought the prevailing 'results oriented' model in education provided such a narrow band for success. She told me she tells her children that Shakespeare and Einstein did not do well in school because they were always questioning. She said, "We are not rewarded for this" (field note, January 11, 1999). Thinking of the children during choice time she said she hates to stop them. She walks around the room, pointing out Aztec buildings, or the zoo animal story, or writing projects going on in various corners of the room. As she does this, children come over to see what is going on. She said Reva, a little girl from India who spoke not a word of English, had her most successful day when all the children surrounded her to see the way she grouped the plastic animals into categories. She should take photos, I suggested to Karin, to honour other ways to learn and know.

I remembered my research project work and how beneficial it was for children labeled 'at risk' who had so few successes in school. I remembered Jeanette's display in

the library "Children's Ways of Knowing". I now viewed the idea in a broader way. Children 'on the outside' were being offered 'a way in'. They had a chance to enter a community of learners, to belong and participate. They experienced a smoother transition because the entry was broad. The word 'welcome' took on more meaning for me. Karin's classroom was a welcoming place.

As the children were given more opportunities to figure out who they were, she, in turn, learned so much about the children. Robert was a budding engineer. Courtney liked to write. Ben's dinosaur puppet was 'fighting' another puppet and he was told to put his away with a reminder that even puppets did not hurt each other in this class.

She told me she changed choice time this year from 'last thing' before the children leave to go home to 'first thing' in the morning. This year she decided not to put anything out for them. At first the children asked if they were 'allowed' to get things out to play with. It took them a while to get over this, she said. It took Karin a while too, to give herself permission to extend 'choice time'. She said she felt guilty "to just let them be" (field note January 24, 1999). She believed in this but what if a parent walked in she wondered. Not all would understand.

I did. She would let extended 'choice time' happen with me there. I told her about the research project work and the honouring of voice I had done as a teacher-librarian. I told her the library in my former school had lego, stuffed toys, puppets and other things in order for children to play and create. I wanted her to know that I thought extended 'choice time' was valuable too. "I'd like to go to your library," she said (field note, January 21, 1999).

One morning visit I noticed Ben erasing his snowman. The children were writing 'January' stories. It struck me I had not seen 'erasing' in Karin's class. Karin did not believe in giving out erasers to children. What a different world Ben must be encountering here. I was reminded of Karin's comment in the fall, that we all need to be allowed to make mistakes.

She, herself, was not sure how to do some things but her commitment was strong enough to go ahead and try, like restitution, for example. Reorienting consciousness was not an easy task. For some children in the class this approach to discipline was an abrupt change in orientation. Karin knew mistakes happened. Making a mistake was not the end of the world. When she asked some children to talk and to figure out what they could do about a problematic situation, it was as if they didn't understand, as if she was speaking a foreign language. Still she persisted. She wanted the children to be part of the problem solving. She wanted them to work their problems out. They would have to think and communicate with each other.

After the two week Christmas break, she felt she needed to go back to revisit their beliefs again. Disputes over snow forts were breaking out at recess. She talked once more to the children about the need to help each other, reminding them about the ideas on their chart, ideas like the need to belong and to be successful. She said change takes time.

Talking about educational issues important to her led us into ever longer conversations during the children's 'choice time' each day. Being together allowed us to notice the same events and talk about them. We noticed children's continual return to the Aztec building story. We were entranced with the children's play and this led to more conversation. We both believed their knowing stemming from the Mexico theme was being expressed. One group of children started making meticulous Aztec temples with the blocks. The stories they created were embodying ideas they encountered in their Mexico unit before Christmas. But the children's ideas were expanding. Now there were action figures and a kind of treasure search adventure story going on. They used whatever material was at hand to make their constructions.

Like the children we were improvising, playing with ideas that came to mind using what bits and pieces of time we had–a bit of 'choice time' here, a piece at recess there. Like the children we were revisiting and building on our conversation from the day before.

As the last short days of January drew near, Karin and I became increasingly amazed at the longevity of the Aztec building story. Everyday the children spread out the large wooden blocks on the carpet. To these were added smaller painted blocks, wooden sticks, sponge blocks, action figures. Ben joined in by adding toy cars and secret passage ways. One morning when I arrived, Karin grabbed me as I entered the classroom and said "I have something to tell you!" (field note, January 25, 1999). Now we were researchers together!

She said that yesterday she sat down with Gwen and told her about the building story going on in 'choice time'. The children had been at it for weeks. Now an adventure game amongst the Aztec ruins was evolving, she said. Gwen was puzzled. She said there was nothing like that in her room during exploration time. She told Karin she tried to encourage the children but their play was static. Gwen said that during exploration time she left the children with an aide while she worked with children individually on their reading.

We wondered. Karin thought perhaps time had something to do with it. Karin's children had extended choice time and they became engrossed. I wondered about that too. I noticed in the fall, before choice time was extended, the children often took out board games or played on the computers. *A story required more time because stories involved relationships of time, place and characters. Time for play seemed to offer the opportunity to merge worlds, the outer world of classroom themes like the Mexican unit and the inner world's of children's imagination. Through play a connecting place was made for both.*

I was reminded of my developing research relationship with Karin. We also had time to play with our ideas. I had been with her in her classroom for almost four months now. Like the children we were engaged in an educative activity through our interaction over time. In the fall, I helped where need be, getting pencils, doing the odd jobs, and asking about her program, as I observed. My involvement was pretty surface level stuff and as an entry point it was civil and safe. Gradually, as we got to know each other *through sharing one another's stories, our conversations focused on Karin's emergent ideas around literacy and my interest in change and continuity. "It seems to be moving to a deeper level with Karin–I feel like I'm becoming part of the story," I wrote (personal journal entry, January 25, 1999).*

Before going to lunch, Karin and I sat down in the garden room and talked about the co-operation children showed. She said these conversations were so good, "So much of school is do, do, do" (field note, January 24, 1999). She said she would think of things at the time, but then she was "on to the next thing" with never a chance to go back. I suggested she take photos. *I thought photos might give her an opportunity to draw her back to what she believed in, even if there was no time right then.*

Earlier in the month she shared the frustration that she felt like people were "in a pinball machine–you are bounced from one thing to another–how do you stop this?" (field note, January 11, 1999). This feeling was what led her to her practice of using journals over the last several years. She said journals helped create some distance. She told me journal writing gave her more control, not of the situation, she couldn't do anything about that, but of her reactions to the situation. She wondered about journaling for children and whether the notion of literacy might expand to include knowing yourself.

We kept returning to 'choice time'. She commented on how much social learning was going on. 'Choice time' was another kind of literacy Karin thought. The social learning spilled over. She talked about the fun they had outside making snow forts with the 'snosaws'. The saws formed part of the school wide building and technology unit planned the year before to compliment the measurement stations in the fall. Karin attended a workshop and consequently ordered the blue and orange plastic saws from the inventor in Saskatchewan. There was enough money for saws for all the primary classrooms. They were a great hit with many of the older children and even parents asked to purchase them to try their hand at carving snow blocks for backyard igloos.

I joined the children outside one sunny morning near the end of January. They were happily building a fort together. Karin said they began with listening to the snow. They marveled at the quiet and then began their work. Three children gathered fresh snow. Samantha packed down the snow to make it hard enough to carve. Several children sawed chunks and brought them to the builders to put in place. Karin helped Samantha. Karin said she felt like she was pounding snow for hours. Her muscles were tired, but it had been so much fun. Karin commented on how well the children worked together on the project. They helped each other and figured out how they could each make a contribution.

How different this was from the 'out of classroom place' where Karin said her teacher team came together so quickly. There had been no time to figure out how to work together. I wondered. As we talked about the children and their snow building, we attended to the idea that each of the children took a part, that each contributed in different ways. Karin said she contributed to her teacher team with her ideas in art and she felt that each person on the team had gifts to contribute.

She told me there was a sense that everyone should do the same thing. She brought up parent expectations. She said, "The script thing, that's what I don't want" (field note, January, 25, 1999). She thought there was an aura of competition in the school. She sensed many teachers were not confident in what they knew. She thought that being the same was less threatening. We wondered why it was so easy for children to work together. She said if only differences were accepted in adults as they are with young children. *It was difficult to sense evolving change in the 'out of classroom place'. There was less time but there was something else. Competition and one best way of doing things created such a narrow opening for other points of view. Colliding worlds rather than enriched worlds came to mind. It was a counterpoint to what was happening in the classroom.*

Separated Lives

"Write down something you feel is a sense of accomplishment over the last couple of years, and then think of the story that would go with it," Jeanette said (field note January 29, 1999). I was sitting at a round table in the library with Karin and the primary year one/two teachers. It was the last school day of January, the professional development day. Jeanette passed each staff member a piece of school teddy bear stationary. Karin wrote quite a few things but Gwen was stumped. Karin looked up at Gwen and said "restitution" and Gwen put that down. Jeanette asked people to tuck this away to look at later.

Jeanette stood amongst staff at the tables. She was not at the front where her books and papers were. She told them she had difficulty knowing what to say but she thought of the starfish story and proceeded to tell it. She said that she believed in her heart that even making a difference for one was important. It seemed that every morning there was a whole new batch of starfish on the shore needing to be thrown back into the sea.

She asked staff to look at their handouts, an agenda for the day's activities. A page was set up to show the cross threading of children's worlds to the beliefs they were developing as a staff. I recognized the beliefs. I had seen them around the school–the motto which hung in a banner at the entrance; the wooden letter displays in the library and transformed office spaces; the T-shirts of many children and staff that said children were the heart of the school.

The ideas of 'being successful', 'creating a world of learning', and 'belonging' set the tone for the learning relationships sought with the children. The ideas of 'honour', 'hope' and 'joy' were to reflect the working relationships teachers might have with each other. Following this page were separate wheels, one per page, with spokes drawn to invite response. Jeanette wrote each of the beliefs by hand at the tops of pages. She asked staff to work in groups to fill in the "whys" of this philosophy. She told them she wanted the "whys" to drive the decision making because she knew the "whats" might look different due to severe budget restraints. She wanted them to continue on the path they were creating and the one she was confirming. *She hoped teachers would realize their own unique gifts so they might contribute to the responsive community she was trying to build with them.*

She began to 'unpack' each of the beliefs, to describe them in the ways of practice. She started with 'belonging'. Karin nudged me to whisper that this was the basis for the belief in restitution. I knew it to be so. Karin always interacted with her students in a way that kept their self esteem intact. Children were not excluded, only guided to making safe choices for the situation. Jeanette said children needed to feel attached to a staff member. It might not necessarily be their own teacher.

She went on to the need for 'success'. This would likely not mean the same thing for all children. She encouraged teachers towards the arts and more 'hands-on' activities. Children of different ages could work together. It was important for staff as well as children. The ideas fit with Karin's notions of multiple–literacy and learning about yourself.

Jeanette talked about 'creating a world of learning' and the need for a common language. She talked about elementary school as possibly the only time in a person's entire life that a person might remain in the same place. It was something that could not be squandered. She said teachers needed to go beyond their classroom to see children through the years. It was the idea of pulling through the threads from K-6.

Jeanette talked about the way she hoped staff would be able to work with one another with joy, hope and honour. She said it was particularly important now, with budget cutbacks, to work together, to build relationships and to share. *She was not asking them to narrow teaching tasks in the light of fiscal restraints. She was asking them to embrace a much more expansive view of education, that embodied an ethical ideal espoused by Noddings (1992) to govern the teaching-learning relationship by care.*

I wondered how these words, delivered passionately by Jeanette, might seem to the staff. Karin had told me of old stories of school where the focus on achievement as defined by measured results permeated the 'out of classroom place'. Perhaps Jeanette's world was as different for some staff as the world in Karin's class that Ben encountered.

With the others at our table, I began scribbling down notes on the wheels. Most teachers gravitated first to the wheel headed by dreaming, playing and creating under 'Joy'. Karin talked about opportunity and open-ended exploration. Other teachers agreed and said they should not feel guilty about playful exploration. The need for time came up regarding exploration. Sifting through the pages, talk moved to values under 'Hope'.

It was interesting to me that this heading brought out issues around the need for parents to know teachers as whole people. One teacher mentioned that "when Bruce is sick, Jeanette is not here" (field note, January 29, 1999). *I thought about how Jeanette models attention to the whole person. Separation into roles means we are only known partially. I thought if people are known by their role positions not by their stories the possibility for recognition and attachment is narrowed. What kind of knowing is this I wondered?*

Jeanette looked at her watch and, because everyone was engrossed, she said to go ahead through recess with the conversation. My group could have spent the whole day this way. Nobody was noticing the time. They were eager for talk. Karin remarked many months later that it seems "the classroom door is like a blinder" (written response to story, July, 1999). She said it is so difficult to see beyond–to get the whole picture. She believes most teachers are interested in seeing the whole picture but "time, circumstances, fear and other things prevail and prevent teachers from taking an active part" (written response to story, July, 1999).

The latter part of the morning focused on the school-wide building unit planned by a team of teachers last June. It was a revisiting after the initial improvised attempt at school wide activities with the fall measurement stations. There were suggestions for next time. Using the gym was a problem because of scheduling. Using hallways would work well for displaying activities taking place. I thought about the way school-wide activities could evolve over time through this reflection.

When we broke for lunch, Karin told me she felt that, after this morning, there was some movement on the part of her group to develop a common language. *I wondered how people learn a new language. Learning a new language is risky but people will attempt more if they feel safe to make mistakes. People learn language as they are continually responded to. But for that they have to be together.*

Back in her classroom, before I left that day, Karin wanted to tell me something. She recalled an old story of school. She said several years ago everybody emptied out of the staff room and "we've never got it back" (field note, January 28, 1999). It was the year everyone changed grade levels but one. Karin felt overwhelmed at times she said. (journal entry, February 6, 1999). *As a public place 'the out of classroom place' can have an aura of performance, of expertise. Usually it is not safe to be uncertain in this place. Karin said everyone had vanished from the staff room, this 'out of classroom place'. I wondered what had brought this story to her mind? Had this morning seemed different? Was a new story of school just beginning to be glimpsed in contrast to an older one?*

The next day in Karin's classroom was 'Hundreds Day' and the children brought in plastic bags of cheerios, popcorn, nuts and jujubes to be poured into a large glass bowl to be sampled, ten at a time, throughout the day. The morning message on the board announced yet another special day. All the primary classes took part so, at recess, in the staff room the teachers were all talking about the same thing.

Many children had not brought in their bags. In Karin's class Ben and a few others had not brought theirs. The teachers were distressed by what they saw as a change. This kind of thing was happening more and more it seemed. Just a week later Karin had to share her parent volunteers with Gwen for field trip supervision. There were not enough parents to go around. *I wondered how much teachers talked about these changes. The* *community had certainly been the source of intense conversation at the professional development day. The teachers seemed to be playing catch-up to the new realities off the landscape of school.*

We continued to observe the ongoing building story developing in the classroom during 'choice time'. As we watched the children putting their 'stories' away, it occurred to us that although the children did not really like to put their things away, there was not much fuss, because they knew, they trusted, they would be allowed to continue the next day. They would not have to replace one thing with another and start anew. We thought about this. Karin thought it would be great for children to have the opportunity to play with blocks all through school. "We don't do that, do we–it's once, and on to the next thing–just think what they would be making by grade 6" (field note, February 1, 1999). *It was the revisiting idea again, 'going in deep' instead of 'adding on'.*

Perhaps because Karin was catching glimpses on the periphery of a different story of school, the idea of 'change' was coming to the fore. Karin decided to write down all the changes she experienced in the school since she arrived. In the journal we shared, she listed them. There was the ongoing cycle of principals and new curriculum in several areas: there were staff changes, assignment and grade level changes. She moved rooms eight times, in almost the same number of years.

She recalled again the year so many teachers changed assignments. She said it was an experiment designed with good intentions but she felt it put the school in chaos. She said the teachers didn't realize they would all be moving. It was the year she mentioned earlier, the one where teachers stopped coming to the staff room. She said that she thought there were changes in the community also. She felt that two serious incidents in the community altered the sense of security the community once felt. She wrote also about the impact of a new sociopolitical climate and of changing demographics since her arrival at the school.

Later in the week we went out to lunch together at a little coffee shop close by. She watched the clock but enjoyed the slower pace away from school. Between mouthfuls she told me more. Karin spoke of changes 'they' made to programs in the school. Karin said she was often not in favour of ideas but then "I just taught grade one" (field note, February 8, 1999). *It was interesting that Karin was talking about 'they' as if* *she did not belong.*

It reminded me of a conversation earlier. We talked about the difference there seemed to be between 'evolve' and 'replace'. With 'evolve' the person is in the change. She agreed, "with evolve you broaden your perspective". "Write that down!" I said (field note, February 5, 1999). She continued to tell me what was on her mind. She said, because of all the changes, there was a "legacy of people being guarded, defensive and competitive" (February 8, 1999 conversation). *Karin endured so many changes in the old story of school. She was not a part of these changes. They happened to her. They did not come from her. How did Karin cope I wondered? Karin told me she learned to be a journal writer. She began by simply making lists. I also knew of her close relationship to Gwen and to her family. Journals, story and conversation would expand the dimensions of the experience making it more likely as Bateson said to give a sense of continuity in all the changes.* ***It would be easier to make connections if she was working with a bigger picture.***

It was this attending to wholeness that was so engaging to the group of teachers I was with at the professional development day. Attending to the whole picture was a fact of life in Karin's class. "You have to get to know what's going on with people," she said (taped conversation, February 8, 1999). She felt tension when she thought about the narrow version of success measured for progress reports. They were coming up again in March and she was glad Jeanette encouraged anecdotes. She said she likes to tell parents "Babies don't receive grades for walking" (field note, March 2, 1999).

She brought our conversation back to Jody, a child in her classroom. She would have had to give Jody a "C " for language learning on every report card. But Karin knew so much more about Jody. She talked about Jody's flare for art. Karin saw a bigger picture. Jody's parents enrolled her in art lessons and the success Jody felt in this one area was starting to permeate all her work. Her parents were thrilled.

Other parents were not. There were complaints being made downtown by parents about the child-centred programming going on in Karin's room. It was the final act in a drama begun with the book circulating in the fall. Some parents, it seemed, wanted more teacher-directed programming. Karin felt struck in her heart. She had tears in her eyes as she told me. "But I am directing the program," she said (field note, March 6, 1999). With no conversation, with no opportunity to talk about why she was doing what she did Karin had no opportunity to voice what she believed in.

It wasn't a 'free for all' in Karin's room. Karin was making purposeful choices stemming from 'her story to live by'. No wonder she was struck to the heart. Karin knew why she allowed children to do certain things. ***She was attending to Jody in such a way that Jody would have an opportunity to be successful and to continue to grow. She was attending to Jody's emerging 'story to live by'.***

In a conversation in the garden room that month, she told me about the way she was allowed by her parents to mess up her room and to build and construct things as a child. Karin went on to become an architectural draftsperson and then a teacher. For Karin, art has always been a part of who she is. In the earlier conversation over lunch (February 8, 1999), she informed me that, in teaching, she could bring this passion to her work. She told me that on one of the days when she was painting alongside the children in the classroom, one of them asked what she was doing. She told them she was playing, "Why do you think I became a teacher? So I could play!" The child was puzzled. "You're so funny, Ms (Smith)," he said (taped conversation, February 8, 1999). *I thought how*

Karin, too, in acknowledging the larger picture expressed 'her story to live by' in her work.

And, just as Jeanette spoke at the professional development day, Karin wanted to help children feel successful so they, too, could contribute their special gifts to the community. The situation was always challenging because she needed to walk the line between for example, Tony, a year one, impulsive, bouncing little boy, and Jon, a reflective, articulate, year two boy. She was unsure how to do this she said. *She would try. She would improvise, even if she was not sure, because of her passion, commitment and beliefs about 'her children'. Using open-ended activities made the most sense, allowing both children to participate.* She went on to say she avoids giving the children versions of fixed products.

> Karin: I purposefully don't often have samples.
>
> Pam: Hmm–for some it's going to narrow it, for others it's going to make it hard for them.
>
> Karin: And I didn't realize that–I know a lot of teachers busy themselves with samples–this is what it will look like.
>
> Pam: This is what I want–you get top marks if you get this.
>
> Karin: And I don't do that–I don't do that for art projects. I create with them and I'll show them methodology but I never show them a finished one or a finished writing piece. I'll pick them up periodically while they're working and say well this is really good–a neat idea…I think what we're doing is constructing things together–we're building together. (taped conversation, February 8, 1999)

I am struck by the similarity here between Jeanette's wishes for the school and Karin's wishes for her class–to create a story together. The in and out of classroom places kept Jeanette and Karin apart.

It was February budget time and Karin said she would see less of Jeanette because of demands on Jeanette's time. She wanted to learn from Jeanette because Jeanette knew how to talk to parents Karin said. She was having difficulty communicating with one of her children's parents. They had "not hit it off from day one" (field note, February 23, 1999). She wanted to learn if there were better ways to go about communicating.

As we walked past Jeanette's office on our way out of the school at lunch, she said Jeanette had lots of experience with parents. She wished she could learn from Jeanette how to interact with parents better. "We don't see this, everyone just does their own thing" (field note, February 23, 1999). *As I walked down the halls towards the front doors, I could only think about another partial view.*

Authoring a Story

We both heard the words "Be the change", first uttered by Gandhi and repeated by Jeanette on the professional development day in January (field note, January, 29, 1999). In the classroom, Karin and I were fascinated with the notions of abrupt change and evolving change. When I asked Karin about her classroom practices in the fall and early winter she always used the word 'evolve'. The word became a kind of joke between us. I also learned of the many abrupt changes that took place while Karin was at the school. The abrupt changes often came from the 'out of classroom place' but had an impact on the 'in classroom place'. *I noticed how, in sharing our thoughts in conversation and in a dialogue journal, Karin was talking with me, not to me. I felt the research relationship to be collaborative.*

Karin bought a bright red teacher's journal complete with apples and pencils on it. It was for our use. I loved receiving the journal from Karin and I would read her words first thing on my return home from school. Writing in the journal was another way to play with ideas and to continue our conversation. We were talking about change and I wrote in the journal:

> *The interesting thing about the chaotic change is that it does seem to come as 'external' as you say–scripted by something else perhaps but not your own, the way evolving seems to be. What strikes me about this kind of*

> *change is the newness of the situation. It's not a case of returning to something you are familiar with but have a new slant on. It is new and so it's hard to recognize and I wonder if we get easily distracted by form over substance in this situation. How do you manage in this situation? You talked about how important it was to have Gwen during your 'reign of chaos'. I think about how important it was to have my sister as we moved so frequently when I was a child. I wonder if that helps you get back to the substance when all around you the form is different. Thanks for wondering about these things with me Karin. -Pam (dialogue journal, February, 1999).*

She responded to my entry:

> *I liked what you said about chaotic change causing a shift in perspective or a tilt on the way of looking at things. Maybe these sudden shifts are necessary to cause one to pause and reflect 'what is important here', what is the substance of what matters? It has been interesting that in the midst of all the talk of change in the past we are again facing abrupt and form altering change at the school once again. Budget talks are shaking up the ground we stand on and Jeanette is asking us to look at differing ways to organize to accommodate the decreasing amount of money. -Karin (dialogue journal, February, 1999).*

Karin ended this piece by saying she never seemed to be able to return to write more about this. For Karen it was difficult to find time to respond, but she tried the best way she could. Once she pasted in an article she came across in her readings. ***She wanted to join in and keep the written dialogue going and this would have to do under the circumstances. With time at a premium she was improvising*.**

Along with winter snow building activities, the children were doing mini research projects about penguins. Today I watched the children create paintings of penguins in Antarctica. I noticed the way Karin painted with the children, never getting in front of them. She asked the children to make sure they painted the whole page: everything was there, the colours of sky and ice, as well as the figures. She told the children they had to think a lot before they started. She explained that if they made a mistake they could not erase. They would have to fit the mistake into the painting, not start again. *They would* *have to improvise, working with what they had. The painting would evolve from there. It would not be thrown out and replaced.*

March came in like a lion. It still looked like January outside, but that was fine because the children were still immersed in penguins. The release teacher came in and we were able to go to the garden room and root around for more material in the 'penguin file'. I told Karin I had been looking through my notes. "Let's sit down so you can tell me," she said (field note, March 2, 1999). So I continued. I said I had come up with a distinction between 'let' and 'tell'. She let people do things just as her Mom let her do things as a child. I offered that perhaps, in abrupt change, there is much more vulnerability to 'tell'–like 'tell me what to do'. She said there are different things she did to cope with change.

She wrote in the journal about this. She mentioned ignoring, complaining, leaving, cheer leading, and closing her door to do 'her own thing'. She told me that, with curriculum change, she read and found resources, and kept these in the back of her mind; she pulled out what she needed but she always attended to the children first. I said I wondered if some people got overwhelmed with change and did not see through to what matters. We were both thinking about the need to prepare children for this; there were always continual changes. Changes were a natural part of life. I was thinking once again to Karin's comment on the pinball machine. She was thinking of this conversation too. She returned once again to the idea of journals for children.

I returned to Dewey's (1938) notion of continuity. My sense of what he meant was getting firmer. I knew he was not talking about preparing children for specific tasks in adulthood. I could see more clearly he was talking about strengthening children's 'preparedness' in the way Karin and I were thinking. Giving children the opportunity to be a part of what they did built in them a stronger sense of who they were. It made me wonder about openings in curriculum for bringing the children 'in'. There are ways, they are all around us, but it is what we attend to. Attending to children's emerging 'story to *live by' as Karin did with Jody created an opening for Jody to participate. I tried to create openings for student's 'story to live by' in research project work. I called it voice.*

Karin and I continued to talk. It was a concern to Karin that a teacher friend did not paint with his grade sixes. She said often after grade three "they don't even have a cozy area." (field note, March 2, 1999). It would be unusual to see blocks. *I was thinking about the changes that seemed to take place in programming for children as they continued their schooling.* ***Instead of strengthening a 'story to live by' for each child, I was thinking that there seems to be one story only for each of them.***

Penguins had taken over Karin's classroom. I saw a copy of Mr. Popper's Penguins (Atwater, 1979) on the shelf. Penguins of all shapes and sizes as well as paintings, articles and memorabilia were brought to class. The children created their own display and bulletin board. They wrote reports using their handmade dictionaries and put their reports up on the bulletin boards. Talking about the bulletin board, Karin said, "It's theirs, not neat and tidy" (field note, March 8, 1999).

They arranged things the way they liked but first they would 'show and share'. Karin brought things in too. She shared a newspaper article with the children about Shackleton's exploration to the South Pole. On another day, as in the story Mr. Popper's Penguins, a newly arrived penguin puppet emerged from a crate Karin's husband made. The children loved it. *Karin was doing more than delivering mandated curriculum to the students. They, Karin and the children, were making curriculum together, that is, they were participants in their own learning, not outside of it.*

A 'big book' would include some newly gathered information to go with penguin paintings from a few weeks ago. One child wrote, "A king penguin is sliding down the hill while an emperor penguin is waiting his turn" (field note, March 8, 1999). The phrase exemplified the kind of learning that took place.

The builders were still playing out their story. They were now making elaborate castles with drawbridges, moats and turrets. They added more coloured blocks and action figures. For a while they used playing cards. Back in February we thought the story was over because the children were intrigued with the playing cards and tricks that Jon's Grandad brought to class to show them. After a few days they were back 'at it' and the cards became another part of the building adventure story. The change Jon's Grandad introduced at first seemed to deflect the children's block story play but, after a few days, they went back to their play using the cards as walls to fit into their story. *They were committed to their story and they were allowed to return to it. The cards, at first a disruption, were now being incorporated, so it continued, now with a new slant. It was an improvisation that kept the story going.*

Neil added straws. He snaked them along the floor around the tables. The straws were in bundles of ten for math. They were the newest addition to the building story reflecting the more formal learning going on in math class. Karin simply asked if they could be put back that way after the children used them. The 'sticks building story' had now been going on for almost three months. The little changes they incorporated seemed to keep the children's interest. Karin hoped they would remember their story for a long time.

Karin created memories with her children. It was purposeful practice. We talked often about Ben. Much of the time his world seemed to revolve around 'godzillza', however when the topic of family stories came up he "still remembered" his visit to his grandmother's when he was little (field note, February 16, 1999). I thought back to the question Karin posed to me about my memories of school. I told her I remembered things I felt a part of. I remembered the joy of a yellow tunic and ring of flowers in my hair, years ago. I portrayed a fairy in our production of Midsummer's Night Dream on the grounds of a school in England when I was eight.

I told her I felt children would remember many things in her classroom because she let them bring their whole selves to their learning. She went on to say that children should have adventures. *I thought about this. What is an adventure? You do not know the* *outcome. It isn't a totally planned trip. I thought it was similar to this research journey I was on–'Adventures with Pam'.* ***Adventure seems to go naturally with improvisation.***

There was a new adventure beginning in the classroom now. The children were in charge and they expressed their classroom learning in their new penguin plays at choice time. The new penguin play story was easier to recognize after watching the blocks story unfold. The story began with a puppet play the children read in a reader. Rosy Raccoon, Dinosaur and the new Penguin puppet made their appearances at the homemade puppet theatre. Other children brought their chairs over to watch. The shows were animated and the children signed up in threes for each day to practice during 'choice time'. They performed their plays at the end of the day. Karin hoped the children's learning would start with this and then evolve to children writing their own plays. She said she had an amazing way of making papier mache puppets and "that's the next thing" (field note March 5, 1999).

Not all children were involved in puppet plays I noticed. Some children continued building but now cups and straws were added to the mix. Ben, with his little cars, continued to be a part. As with Reva, the little girl from India, the play gave Karin a chance to draw the children towards Ben, to show them what he had done. He was able to contribute. Ben was welcomed–now he was blossoming. As with my own son Matthew, play was a way in to a belonging place. I commented that the success he was experiencing was helping to shift his story and she agreed. She talked again about letting the children choose what they wanted to use in choice time. She said that way, the children created things she could never have thought of.

As the days swirled by, the puppet plays became more complex. The children had a stage director now. They added critiques, something they learned about with their paintings during art time. They practiced the same play over and over but some were making small changes to the script and some were writing their own scripts. They learned so much about penguins in the last few weeks that they would have lots to say. They decided they needed cookies for their puppet play performances next week.

Karin loved the ownership the children showed in the room. They were writing reminders on the board and composing morning messages. They were beginning to decorate the room for Spring. There were many spontaneously organized puppet shows. Karin and I did what we could to help. I found myself walking down to the teachers' workroom with a little group of year one and two children to xerox a new script. They skipped back to class and immediately took out their coloured felt markers to underline their parts. They were "playing school" I said to Karin (field note, March 19, 1999).

We talked about how much the children initiate and become authors of what is going on. Karin said she thought the children's initiative sprang from the relationship she had with them. She said she is like a coach and the children coach each other. This was most apparent during 'choice time'. She told the children how proud she was of them. They did not need teacher direction. She asked them why this was so. Different voices rang out. They talked about being more 'grown up'. One said they were "getting more responsible" (field note, March 19, 1999). Karin agreed and they read over their "working together" beliefs again. These were the ones created last September, posted at the front of the classroom, to take the place of rules. The children and Karin acted out this drama but we were both thinking the same thing–'wow'!

What I was witnessing, most profoundly during choice time, was a joint authorship of this classroom story. The children were joining each other and joining with Karin to play out this story of classroom life. There was choice and it was open-ended like the adventure story lived by the builders in the classroom. Separation by grade and position was breaking down. The structure of the relationship shifted over time, like my shifting research relationship with Karin. ***Participating in the making of the story brought everyone closer together. It looked like a responsive community in the 'in classroom place'. As authors they were responsible for their actions. One child had even said so!***

The classroom community was special. It was memorable. Karin however was worried about Ethan. She told me Ethan was a little boy that could have been placed in a special class. I had not realized. Karin had structured her program so Ethan never stood out. He fitted in with everything. It was the second year for Ethan in her class. She wondered how teachers would get to know him next year. She said some teachers might see him as having behaviour problems. There was so much more to see.

For example, to get ready for the next 'open house', Karin flipped through her large collection of photos of the year's activities so far. She pulled one for each child depicting Pajama Day, the Mexican Fiesta, building with blocks at 'choice time' inside, and building with snow blocks outside. In preparation, I was to help the children write a few lines about their photo "One thing I'll always remember" (field note, March 15, 1999). I did not need to scribe for anyone. They wanted to do their own.

What struck me was that Karin knew her children but who was getting to know Karin? Karin seemed to have a wonderful program and no one seemed to know. How will others see all of Karin unless they know her story. How will they know her story unless the doors open up and the 'in classroom place' is allowed to meld together with the 'out of classroom place'? ***Jeanette's intention all along was to build a responsive community in the school I thought. But what of the storied landscape of school? The landscape could make "all the difference in the world" (MacLachlan, 1994).***

I remembered last fall when Karin asked me to scout out other primary classrooms, to bring back ideas. I told her a lot of classrooms I visited were not like hers. Materials seemed sparse and some were traditionally structured. She said she assumed others would be like hers. I said perhaps others feel more pressure to walk the 'straight and narrow'. To teach as Karin did took confidence. "That's why you're good for me," she said (field note, March 19, 1999). *I thought about the support Karin needs to live her own story. For me it was back to my own knowing–relationship can ignite imagination.*

Attention was turning outwards because parents would be visiting for interviews and 'open house'. I covered hallway walls with photos of the snow building activities. The children's photos were from all the primary classes. I attached a few snowsaws to the wall display. Karin covered large wooden building blocks with white paper and they were scattered about on the floor. Other displays joined these, but with a slightly different make up. Walking in the hallways with Karin I mentioned how I saw it as a way of sharing what was happening in the classrooms not just with parents but with each other. *It was a change from the fall when displays by the primary teachers were causing friction when they were not all the same. It was a little thing but a big thing. Now perhaps some things were opening up.*

As Karin and I watched the children and talked to each other during choice time, I mentioned the value of time together in a classroom for teacher research. Karin expanded the idea. She wondered about putting three classes together and using the hallways, the library and other open spaces as extended classroom in the school. In that way, two teachers could be in conversation while the other had release time. She must have been thinking too about the situation next year with reduced dollars to run the school. I was.

At 9:15 when the release teacher arrived, I left for the art room to slice up paper for spring daisies. Karin went to the garden room. We arranged to meet later in the staff room to do the flower centre parts. Walking in, I noticed a posting on the bulletin board about a workshop on the book Endangered minds (Healy, 1990). I mentioned the notice to Karin. She told me a number of staff had read it. While we sat there, Karin continued to talk about the difference between her 'open house' and portfolios. Jeanette walked in and I said that we were being teacher researchers sitting and talking while working.

We returned to class, with pieces of pink and yellow, green and white paper in our arms–colours for the new season. I left again for the hallway to strip away winter; the white paper came off and the 'snow blocks' and snow building photos and snosaws were gathered and put away. Although the wooden blocks were always kept outside, I brought a few back to class. Karin had suggested it. I put them in the building area. She was curious. She thought it would be interesting 'to see just what would happen" (field note, March 24, 1999).

Remembering back, it was these very same blocks, located in the out of classroom place that Jeanette and I grabbed to build the Inukshuk almost two years ago. It made me wonder, was Karin feeling more comfortable, more a part of the out of classroom place?

With the March break at the end of the month, my time in Karin's classroom came to a close. It was hard for me to leave because I felt I was a part of Karin's class. It was hard to leave the children. They taught Karin and I because seeing the world through children's eyes allowed us to travel back to a time of innocence "when we are not yet divided" (Hoffman, 1989, p.). I brought a book to show the children on my last day. It was my master's thesis. I told them I was going to write another book and tell stories of their classroom. They liked that idea. I did not make a dramatic departure. I told them how special they were and that I would always remember them. I gave them each a hug and I slipped quietly away.

I saw Karin in the months ahead. There were chronicles and stories to write and I needed her response. Our three way get together came after that. But I barely left when Karin corralled me when she saw me in the school a few weeks later. It was lunch time so we walked to her room to talk. She wanted to tell me the blocks story was still continuing and now the children were constructing the earth. One child wanted Karin to stop the builders so she could make a castle. The builders, now into their fourth month suggested she make the castle part of the earth. It was so interesting. Karin wanted to talk with me about this new situation with the blocks story. She said it was so important to have others around to talk to, to expand her view. She said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could do this in the school–we have it in classrooms–but what about the school? " (field note, April 8, 1999). Yes!

CHAPTER 7: STORY PIECES

Stories of Experience–Jeanette–Winter 1999

The stories in this chapter take us back to Jeanette's experience in the winter of 1999. I spent one half mornings a week with Jeanette, mostly in her office place. Sometimes we walked and talked in the hallways, library, teachers' workroom and the staff room of the school. I spent more or less time with her depending on the situation. Concurrently I was spending two and one half mornings with Karin in her classroom. The stories of this period with Karin were presented in Chapter 6. This chapter presents three storied themes composed from field notes, transcribed conversations, artifacts and my own personal journal entries as I 'lived' with Jeanette and wrote later of the experience. The storied themes include Fits and Starts, The Open Door, and Trying to Begin.

Fits and Starts

I was anxious to see Jeanette after the Christmas holidays. Taking xeroxing work down to the teacher's workroom for Karin, the primary teacher I was working with, gave me a chance to touch base with Jeanette. Jeanette kept saying how good it was to see me. I had wanted to see her over the holidays but it had not been possible. I told Jeanette before the break that even if we did not see each other I would still be thinking of her–a kindred spirit–as depicted in the card she gave to me at Christmas. As we talked I thought about what Martin Buber (1947) talked about, a dialogic relationship without words, held together in mutual trust. Jeanette was flushed and she told me she had a kind of flu, that it was running through the family. She hoped Bruce did not get it. She was worried because he still was not eating properly. This was problematic with his chronic health situation. It was a dilemma, for her, because he was missing a lot of school and he "prefers to be a homebody," she said. I said it must be hard and she responded that "It was hard" (field note, January 8, 1999).

Later in the week it was Jeanette who dropped by to visit with Karin in the 'garden bubble' attached to Karin's classroom. I was with Karin at the time and I noted the comfortable easy going relationship. Karin said she was "dragging her feet" (January 11, 1999) filling out application forms for a sabbatical leave. Jeanette popped in to be helpful. She knew Karin was working on the form. Jeanette herself was having to deal with filling out forms. Forms to delineate school goals kept being returned. Jeanette wondered if she should put in numbers to make the forms acceptable or whether she should spend a lot of time writing down what she was trying to do, knowing that they would still be rejected. Karin was trying to write specific plans for her intentions in graduate school. Jeanette tried to point out the similarities. "New teachers or those with new assignments might want 'how to' recipes but we are at different stages of development" (field note, January 11, 1999). *For both Jeanette and Karin, the forms spoke a message of 'one shoe fits all' with no attention to temporality as a condition of circumstance.* ***Bateson (1994) talks about a 'mutable' self changing over time as circumstance changes. Fitting into boxes would slow the movement, perhaps stop it altogether.***

A few days later I found myself in the familiar chair in the outer office waiting for my time to talk with Jeanette. I waited as two successive parents came through her doors. I planned to show her my lists of chronicled events which I arranged to suggest stories of the previous year. However, when I stepped inside I was struck by the sight of all the new teddy bears arranged on the round table where she was sitting. She told me many were gifts from children for Christmas. There was also a beautiful crystal in the shape of a snowflake given to her by staff. *Wow, I thought, the gift signaled recognition of Jeanette as a person with a story. It meant that some people, at least, were coming to know Jeanette, attending to her as a whole person, not just as her role as principal.* She asked me to hang it for her in a place to catch rainbows when the sun shone. ***It is interesting to me now that I was not able to bring myself to do this until many months later. Was it***

that I was getting to know the situation? How different this seemed from the year before when we made the inukshuk together. It was a difference in the tone I was feeling. The tone I feel in my heart does not lie. The school landscape, a year and a half after Jeanette's arrival, did not yet feel safe enough to put Jeanette's story out for view.

I could see vestiges of Bruce's morning visit lying on a table, toast and jam crusts amongst the holiday cards and children's books. I asked about him and she said he was okay but that he would be better when he "cracks the code" (field note, January 14, 1999). *These were hard words to hear. I thought about the children I worked with who struggled with school. I thought about my own son Matthew.* ***How often children are not recognized fully for their story but only narrowly for their difficulties and then separated from others because they are not fully known.***

The fragility of the situation seemed to be that as some staff were getting to know Jeanette more fully she had to constantly deal with the situations 'at hand'. The 'situations at hand' could so easily refocus attention away from Jeanette's intentions to compose relationships with staff. All the interruptions fragmented Jeanette's image of an emerging new story of school. I was soon to hear the 'latest awful thing'.

Schools in the district for the first time in many years collectively posted a deficit. For the first time Jeanette said principals were admitting that "they just couldn't do it." (field note, January 14, 1999). They could not live within the assigned budget amount. Principals were being told that budgets had to reflect at least how they would attempt to deal with this issue. The easiest thing to do would be to declare staff surplus, Jeanette said. But what would that do in terms of establishing relationship with staff? Relationships were still fragile. She felt a moral dilemma. She felt the either/or choice was to have fewer teachers and thirty children each in the primary classrooms or to stay with a deficit and be in violation of balanced budget policies. She told me when she talked to parents in a meeting the night before, they seemed shocked. She looked at me and said "It reminds me of your snow story. It's all around but have we paid any attention to it and then suddenly there's the wake-up call" (field note, January14, 1999). *I thought about the story I wrote and shared with her last year. It happened in winter, crossing the mountains to get to my family in Victoria for Christmas. We were wrapped in the glow of holiday prospects, oblivious to the snowstorm intensifying outside. We were choosing not to attend to the storm, not until we heard the urgent words blaring over the radio broadcast. Like a wave washing over us, the mood inside our car became dark and somber.* ***Laying these two stories side by side made me wonder. A particular view can be held for a long time. Even when change is all around as in my snow story, as with the parents' story, perhaps we choose to attend to those things that fit with our view and ignore other things. What changes a view so tightly held? Was it emotion–where stories come from?***

Several days later, at our regular meeting time, I again brought in my folder to show Jeanette the way I organized a 'prelude' to her story of the year before. I used words such as 'setting the tone' and 'invitation' under which to arrange events. What became apparent in our conversation was that she was "still trying to invite and extend an invitation to join which is a big thing here…they are coming–they are talking–they are sharing". Now however there was another dilemma for Jeanette "…and then the question I've been asking for eighteen months–is my story the right story? (taped conversation, January 21, 1999). She told me more of her dilemma.

> Jeanette: It's really hard Pam when you're a bit of a chameleon–very hard when you're a person who believes in professional integrity of the people you are working with to make decisions that are going to be right for them and that part of what I try to do is help people actualize what they want–to provide a solution–provide the idea or sometimes the connection or sometimes the way something can happen–to balance that with the notion that some of what they may want to do is counter or contrary to maybe what I would want to see as a path or direction to take.
>
> Pam: Definitely a balancing act.

Jeanette: Back to the whole issue of–it's much easier to do this with people who are like minded and you trust…. (taped conversation, January 21, 1999)

She reflected back to her last school. At her last school, she had personally known all the staff or was connected to them through mutual acquaintance when the school began. The school was brand new. There was no previous story of the school. Jeanette and the teachers composed a story of school together right from the beginning. Now at this school, it was much more complicated. Jeanette wanted teachers to join with her but things kept getting in the way–in the way of the relationship building she was trying to establish.

Along with news of budget deficits, central administration downtown had directed principals to ask teachers what they could do differently to ease the situation. Jeanette saw the danger, the danger of slipping into a story of "lowest common denominator–minimal expectations rather than what's good for kids" (taped conversation, January 21, 1999). She was concerned about what would happen to integrated curriculum, inclusive classrooms, child centred learning. These ways of working with children took more time and effort on the part of teachers. Could the answers to this question serve to separate her even more? Or could the answers serve to bind them together? The situation was filled with risk. I was trying to think.

Pam: Could you reorient it–instead of what could you take off but what must you have?

Jeanette: Well I've opted not even to ask staff that question but I'll talk to individual people–I'll talk to a few individual people and formulate our response because to me it's a very dangerous question.

Pam: It's the adding and subtracting kind of model.

Jeanette: Yeah–because you could easily say that the one/two fiesta is something you could cut out–and I'm going–oh boy–as a group of people we are not like minded so how do you start on a road?

As I frequently felt when talking with Jeanette, there didn't seem much I could say to help. Could anything positive come out of this situation?

> Pam: For some it will give them permission to think differently–which is good.
>
> Jeanette: Which is good. And there are some people that I now know well enough who will understand what I'm talking about and will be able to do that and there is movement out there. But how easy it is to be pulled into that other story just by that question. How easy it is–planning a budget. (taped conversation, January 21, 1999)

At that moment Lorie, an art design student, appeared at the open doorway. She was there to talk to Jeanette about the primary team's decision to create their own logo. Jeanette asked Lori if she could help. Jeanette was proud of the way people came to the school to contribute. They came because of their connection to her. *It reminded me of what I knew–the power of relationship to inspire commitment.*

Jeanette acknowledged what people had to offer. In the 'one on ones' with staff she talked about what people offered and she revisited the rainbow theme–noting that the pot of gold was the people at the school. Rainbow paper, coloured markers and photos of each staff member were used to sketch out, in a tangible way, the contributions each might make to the school community. Contributions would make a difference money wise because they would not always have to pay for 'outside' people. Jeanette told them it was their gifts that would drive the program. She said that after the 'one on ones', she wrote each person a note to talk about the gift they were sharing.

Revisiting of the rainbow theme was a reminder. It was a chance for Jeanette to retell the story and place it in the context now–the dire budget situation for next year. She improvised to keep the image present. She was going in deeper, to her 'story to live by', rather than 'adding on' or 'taking off'. It was a different way to approach the question of what teachers could do differently. ***Jeanette was seeing the situation from both a deeper and broader perspective to give her 'story to live by' a chance to continue. She looked deeply to her inner knowing and she looked broadly at the situation at hand. I saw her***

multiple attending as a way to keep her hope alive. She did not replace her own story with another one.

The conversation shifted to the upcoming professional development day. I asked if she thought I could come. I was not sure what she would say. Jeanette already talked about her relationship with staff as walking on eggshells and I knew my presence could alter the balance. My question ignited another conversation. Jeanette said that, although some staff were beginning to know her informally, staff meetings still seemed to be a battle.

I said I felt more relaxed in the 'out of classroom places'. Jeanette agreed. She said, "It's coming–slowly–and I need to be patient" (taped conversation, January 21, 1999). We decided I could come to the first part of the professional development day when she was talking. I would be helpful to her then, she said. I could check with Karin about sitting in with her primary team group later in the morning.

She told me she wanted to use what staff said to her in the 'one on ones' to build a context for "figuring out what to do next year when there's no money" (taped conversation, January 21, 1999). *I was beginning to see that although possibilities were narrowing, she would not give up. Even when there was not much to work with, her commitment to attend to the children in the school was strong. This commitment would keep her imagination running.* ***It is commitment that makes imagination moral. It is the drive to do whatever you can with whatever you have, the drive to improvise, that comes from this commitment.***

We walked down to the staff room to get fresh cups of coffee. Jeanette liked a few scoops of hot chocolate in hers. She did not wait until we got back to her office. She began to share her latest ideas.

> Jeanette: One of the things I'm playing around with in my mind–does anybody know how much it does cost to educate a child in (this province)–government–schools–operate within the confines of money available. As

a result of that do we really know how much it costs–what it does cost–I'm wondering about this–here's what (we're) going to do–define first off what we as teachers believe is adequate.

Pam: That's a great idea cause that sets the context for what is the essential thing–possibility of rethinking.

Jeanette: Maybe rather than talk about Cadillac education–let's look at adequate–and I don't want it to be lowest common denominator–but what is essential–adequate, not always ideal because right now we are so far away from our ideal because of things out of our control…then what you do–anything over and above what you decide is adequate–parents may start to say thank you–parents may stop taking for granted what we do …the hard part is going to be agreeing on what is adequate–you and I could agree–but not everybody else…class size–what's adequate–what's ideal–what's criminal? The problem I have is I think 28 kids in a primary classroom is criminal.

Pam: It makes a difference to the programming.

Jeanette: Not only programming–I think there's an implication–when I look at my 5/6s. They are the kids in the school driving me nuts. History tells me that was the time of the kindergarten muddle–where it was taken away–in the following years classes of 29 and 30. I start to think oh there must be an implication–but as soon as I pay attention to that I can't in my heart come up with a school plan that puts 28 kids in a primary classroom. But if I don't, I'm not going to be fiscally responsible–so for the first time.

Pam: So the only way to do it is to recreate.

Jeanette: Right–and the only way I can figure out how to recreate it is to say–let's figure out how much it does cost and what is adequate.

Jeanette was thinking about the professional development day next Friday. As we walked together to her office, she was putting these and other thoughts on the table to explore. ***Commitment to her beliefs was causing her to improvise a solution once again. She was trying to work with what was "funneling" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 3) onto the school landscape in such a way that her 'story to live by' could be lived out.***

She talked again about the need for parents to recognize what was going on in schools and to know teachers more fully. She wanted parents to reclaim traditional territory–to check backpacks, to help with organization skills, to teach courtesy and values important to each particular family. She wanted to talk about this in the professional development day. She was trying these ideas out with me. She said,

> Maybe enough [parents] would begin to say 'I don't have to feel guilty that I'm not coming to school–here are some things I can do–If we get them before kindergarten and build on that in kindergarten and one, and all the way up–see that's the other thing to me–we need to decide even as grade six teachers what is important to kindergarten so that can be built so the thread can be pulled–and that's part of the essential thing and what do we want to get out of this. (taped conversation, January 21, 1999)

The following Friday morning, a cold crisp day in late January, I walked into the staff room to find people relaxed, lingering longer over coffee and sampling goodies set out on a tablecloth. It was the January professional development day. There was lots of jovial goodwill and chatter. I saw Jeanette across the room. She was sitting quietly amongst staff but to me she looked alone. I gave her a squeeze. She whispered she was nervous. The contrast in positions, teachers and principal, was palpable. ***The tone pervading the 'out of classroom' place carried the message that teachers felt the staff room belonged to Jeanette. As teachers they had their place, in the classroom. The division meant they could relax. It was Jeanette's turn. She was expected to perform her role of principal in this place. Seeing Jeanette in this situation, I imagined how stressful these expectations were for Jeanette: the staff meetings, meetings down town. I knew something of her story, I felt her discomfort.***

Because I sat with Karin I wrote about the events of that morning from that position (Chapter Six). At lunch time that day I sat briefly with Jeanette in her office. She asked me if her ideas seemed to come across. I thought they had. The conversations I was a part of reflected a strong sense of broadening the focus to look at relationship and trust amongst children, teachers and parents. There seemed to be almost a thirst for this kind of conversation I told Jeanette. She wondered if the Friday morning session would translate into anything, or would Monday be just the same.

I thought about the need for sustained conversation that Clandinin and Connelly talk about. It seemed so necessary for healing and maintaining trust within a school community. ***Conversation had developed at this place and time. How does the conversation continue?***

The Open Door

The aftermath of the January P.D. day was scattered all over Jeanette's office floor. It was a sea of red paper. She planned to use the bits and pieces, the notes on red paper, to start to compose the 'whats', what they wanted to keep, for next year's budget. She too, noticed a lot of talk in staff groups revolving around the dreams and values wheel. The wheels, drawn with spokes to invite response were part of the working papers teachers wrote on to describe the values which they wanted to hold on to. The papers were filled with words about building trusting relationships, especially with parents; the need for parents to see school staff as whole people. There was little resistance to these ideas.

Jeanette needed teachers to go beyond this, to translate ideas into practices, in order to have something to work with for the budget. The budget would not be put on hold even as people tried to sort out the issues that really mattered to them. It was exasperating. "If only we didn't have to deal with money we could spend the time," she said (field note, February 1, 1999). *The time was necessary for change to evolve, so everyone could be a part.* ***I was starting to see time as a luxury in life. Things were going ahead. The words of Bateson (1994) rang in my mind. To be part of ongoing changes you need to improvise, to join in without knowing the outcome. So much is dependent on trust. Jeanette was willing but the situation with staff was fragile.***

Jeanette talked again about the moral dilemma she was facing. How could she face Gwen, one of her dedicated primary teachers, if she asked her to work in caring ways with twenty-nine or thirty young children. How could she leave the school with a huge deficit for a new principal? Did anyone understand the situation? She felt alone. There were teachers asking for money for field trips. They were not 'extras'; field trips made sense with the emphasis on the arts and 'hands on' learning they all agreed on. Yet she had to say no or suggest an alternative. Like many parents, there were teachers that did not seem to be attending to the budget situation. *I wondered if Jeanette's words might seem like a mixed message. She told them what she believed and now she had to say no to things which seemed a part of her beliefs. How would teachers interpret her response? Everything depended on knowing Jeanette, knowing her 'story to live by'.*

Walking into school the following Friday, crunching through crisp white February snow, I noted Jeanette's sports truck was not in its parking spot. Inside, seated on my 'waiting chair' in the outer office, I chatted and joked with the office staff. They told me Jeanette was out of the building visiting the home of one of the students. I waited about forty minutes for her arrival back at school. When she arrived, we sat down in her office together. She told me the story of Atif, the little boy whose home she had just visited. It was a difficult story for me to listen to because it brought me into a world culturally different from my own. Jeanette was trying to help the family, the little boy, and the teacher whose class he was in. I had seen Atif on several other occasions. Atif could have been 'placed' in a special class, she said. ***Jeanette was trying to attend to Atif in an ongoing way. As with a continuity of care that Noddings (1999) writes about, Jeanette was attending beyond the decision to have Atif included in the class. Having Atif at the school would require more responsiveness. To keep Atif at the school required continual attending.***

I brought up the idea of lunch that day so we could look over some of the photos I had collected in my album. She said "well" and I knew it would be difficult for her to leave the school for lunch (field note, February 5, 1999). I recalled how she mentioned just last month that she still needed to limit the times she was out of the building. She had to be present to catch things before they blew up. I told her I too had to be in a position to be interrupted because Matthew, our son, now had so many new support workers I never knew what might happen. I needed to continually attend.

We sat together in her office. There was no lunch for Jeanette to eat. As she turned the pages of the album, she told me she liked the words I chose to go with the pictures, especially words taken from the school plan, words like 'children's ways of knowing' and 'a place to belong'. She asked if she could borrow it to show what she was trying to do. She had received an email saying her goals were fine now.

As usual her office door was open. Mixed amongst quiet musings with me over the photos were Jeanette's jocular exclamations through to the outer office regarding incoming phone calls and people milling about during lunch hour. People came and went. I noticed how adept she was at attending to many things at once. It seemed like a train station at rush hour sometimes. Kerry, a teacher, poked her head in. She asked if we wanted her to get us something to eat as she was on her way out for lunch. Jeanette laughed and said she wanted lots of chocolate.

Jeanette invited me to stay the afternoon since we had not gone for lunch. The steady stream continued. She was not afraid to let staff know she was struggling with the budget problem. "How do I do this?" (field note, February 5, 1999) she quizzed the secretaries, support staff, teachers as they would look at her amidst her sea of red. *With her door wide open she was inviting them into her world, to know more of her story, who she was.*

She talked about a meeting with senior teachers about bullying behaviour by students. She asked the teachers what they thought should be done. She said for the first time a single view had given way to many ideas. She felt the group had begun to see how different their ideas were from each other. In Jeanette's view this was a positive change.

Along with some of the "really good stuff" (field note, February 5, 1999) she received from staff from the red professional development papers and from agreement on continuing last year's goals, there was a sense of building a critical mass to go forward. "But," Jeanette said, "they want me to figure out what to do about the situation" (field note, February 5, 1999). *It was the loneliness again I thought.* ***There was a difference between following Jeanette, which now many staff seemed willing to do, and joining with her. The position of principal kept getting in the way, creating a border to separate her story from theirs. Jeanette wanted to create a new larger story together.***

Jeanette shared an image with me. She said she saw herself at the bottom of a deep well, dark, with slimy walls. The water was dripping, drip, drip. Every now and then there was a big gush of water and she thought she was going to drown. She wondered how she could climb out. She said if you stood on your head and could do it, then nobody would know there's a problem. She wanted to restructure "but not in a way that would hurt kids" (field note, February 5, 1999). She thought about dramatic restructuring with release time. She had done something like this in her previous school. The restructuring would have to happen quickly, starting next fall. There would not be the luxury of letting the plan evolve. She could play with regrouping children and staff so that teachers' preparation time could be accommodated without bringing in and paying for a specific release teacher. In that way she could keep the primary classroom sizes low.

She thought of a kind of rotation system where one teacher had preparation time while the other two shared three classes in larger assembly type activities. I knew that this was only the beginning. Over time many ideas would be talked about. Such a plan would be a creative way to bring to the fore the gifts of staff members. It meant the possibility of staff designing their own programs with a focus on values and the arts outlined in the school goals. Getting the support of staff would be critical of course, but Jeanette felt she was very close to that point.

The plan would be an abrupt change, calling for improvisation on everyone's part. The plan was open ended. The plan was not clear. There was only a sense of what the release time might look like. ***It reminded me of a path to an inukshuk, the hope and courage needed to walk towards an inukshuk when it is only a mere glimmer on the horizon. Would everyone want to be a part of the release time plan? Did everyone have the kind of commitment to the idea that Jeanette had? How far had people come towards feeling they were part of this 'out of classroom' place?***

Jeanette began sketching out her ideas on paper to show me. They were just scribbles, very tentative, her thoughts for now. She started asking teachers down to her office. She called Gwen. What did she think? I looked on as Gwen contributed suggestions and questions. When Gwen left I asked Jeanette if this was an example of the way she was now communicating with staff. She said yes, she wanted me to see this.

As Jeanette brought teachers in, they had a chance to be part of the future story of school. The opportunity would not have happened in staff meetings where Jeanette talked of silence amongst so many. ***Both the staff room and Jeanette's office were 'out of classroom places'. The invitation Jeanette extended to staff to join with her in her office to help figure out what to do seemed to be changing the 'sense' of this place.***

It seemed like stolen moments to have the time, a few days later, to sit with Jeanette in her office to visit once again with the photos in my album. I placed the teddy bear school paper on the first page of the album. She liked that. "It's really interesting–this little thing–that incorporates a lot–the colour–the heart–the children" (taped conversation, February 12, 1999). *I began to see how much the little things contributed to setting a tone open to relationship; cookies on a table, the way people were welcomed, the open door.*

As she leafed through the pages pausing at photos of the inukshuk, the newly painted blue walls, the little girl measuring her friend on the floor in the library, stories came to mind. She said she purposely had not painted much of her office space because she did not want it to be a cost issue with parents and staff. Looking at the photo of the inukshuk she mentioned that now, with the snow building activities outside, some people were talking about the inukshuk that stood in the office for so long. The beginning talk about the inukshuk was curious and she paused to think.

Jeanette: So that's kind of interesting–how–over eighteen months–without me ever directly saying anything–because I still haven't talked to the staff about this....

Pam: Very subtle–it's just there–I was thinking about an inukshuk on the landscape…you can have a symbol through the ages can't you–and it will always be–like (a written one) people look at it and read it and say it doesn't make any sense because they're still reading it, not retelling the story. But with a symbol you're automatically retelling. It's whatever it means at the time.

Jeanette: Yeah–at the time–yeah.

Pam: The hands–does it ever come up in conversation–anything–the kids go over (to the pit) and find their hands.

Jeanette: Yeah and this has been very interesting–again like the inukshuk–it hasn't been talked about.

Pam: It's just sort of there.

Jeanette: It's there and you see it in a whole bunch of different places–interesting–Janet did hand prints of the kids. We didn't do hand prints of the kids this year we did them last year. Now this year they did the same activity but in the background was a rainbow.

Pam: Isn't that amazing Jeanette!

Jeanette: And in the palm of the hand she put little sticker hearts.

Pam: That's absolutely amazing–and then you wonder how conscious it is.

Jeanette: And so I did the crystals this year. The crystals followed through–the support staff and I got crystals. It tells me that that's how this group of people work–as much as they want me to be directive–and we've had

> this conversation–they want–they perceive that as a principal I must be directive but on the other hand they do not want me to tell them–they don't want me to be directive…as soon as I do that–any situation in the last eighteen months where I've said 'we must do this' there has been flare or reaction or sabotage or underground.
>
> Pam: Interesting.
>
> Jeanette: But–some of the things that make perfect sense to me, but I've been reluctant to share in a conscious way have sort of infiltrated.
>
> Pam: Now these are all things that mean something to you–a part of your story but a way to go back to your story–a way for staff to see your story.
>
> Jeanette: Yeah or a way to share a story that they don't understand… because I can't help them figure out my story. (taped conversation, February 12, 1999)

She told me that even reorganizing with release time was not a new concept with staff. She brought it up last year at budget time as a possible way to save money. At the time it did not go anywhere. Now the idea was meeting less resistance as if a kernel had been planted and now was beginning to germinate. Ideas slipped into the 'out of classroom place', subtly so they might permeate before a border would arise.

We went on slowly through the album. We stopped at the page showing a photo of heart shaped frames, constructed specially to hold children's art in one of the long hallways. She commented.

> Frames of kids and hearts you know and I really kind of tried–see–visually things are being tied together–now the challenge is we need to start to tie them together in practice and I think some of this (pointing at the album) to do that, because we're going to have to talk differently. (taped conversation, February 12, 1999)

Even in this indirect way, trying to build relationships through conversations here and there in her office, she said she had to be careful. She wanted to encourage people coming but still the aura of competition lingered in the 'out of classroom place'. An invitation to talk with her could be viewed as favoritism. Who might she talk to first? So many stories did not get back to her. In trying to build relationship she told me she would praise where she could. Often she would have to bite her tongue. "But still–I haven't said anything direct towards anybody–isn't that funny," she puzzled. "It's like Mrs. Roundabout," I replied (taped conversation, February 12, 1999).

The conversation reminded me of a family story I wrote and shared with Jeanette a while back. Mrs. Roundabout was a very small but kindly visitor who arrived unannounced one year on the occasion of my sixth birthday. She was bundled up in a soft patterned blouse, a strand of beads, head scarf and had an uncanny resemblance to an elder aunt. She flurried in and flurried out in a matter of minutes, never saying much except for a greeting. Her presence was long remembered. It was her name that struck me now. It spoke of circles instead of straight lines. I learned decades later that Mrs. Roundabout's appearance at birthdays had been a family tradition dating back over a century ago to Cotswold farmland back in Britain.

I turned the tape recorder off when Marnie, a teacher, walked in. Jeanette said she had some ideas she wanted to pass by Marnie about next year. I watched and listened as Jeanette brought Marnie in. She started by having Marnie sit next to her so she could see the scribbles and tentative ideas being formulated on paper with her pencil. She told Marnie again the bad news about the budget and then that they would have to organize the school differently to reduce costs and address the red papers; one way to organize was to keep low class sizes in the primaries and call on the 'gifts' of support staff. She said reorganizing would not entirely clear the deficit but would reduce it.

As the ideas about release time changes spun out between them the excitement grew. "You could really go places with this" Marnie said (field note, February 12, 1999). One idea was to teach pro-social values in small family groupings with kindergarten children and year six children working together. "Kids are awesome teachers," Marnie said (field note, February 12, 1999). Celebration days could incorporate the arts and be done in larger groups. There were lots of details to sort through but Jeanette's suggestion was to start immediately in the fall. Marnie loved it. "I'm on your team," she said (field note, February 12, 1999).

The plan changed shape all afternoon–alive and moving with the voices of each participant teacher as Jeanette continued to retell. *Teachers were invited to play school. They were asked to participate in the planning of this 'out of classroom' story. They were being valued for their opinions and for who they were. The ambiance was informal. It would be safe to take risks and make mistakes with Jeanette. It was a dramatic shift in the story lived in the 'out of classroom place'.*

I watched Marnie in the staff room sorting through a box of homemade cards for Valentine's day. Children in the school had made them and Marnie was getting them ready to be sent away to people living in the surrounding community. I commented on the lovely idea and the time she was devoting to it. I thought of other contributions being made by staff–ones I noted in passing. The food and articles of clothing for the Honduras project, the teddy bear chairs and decorations in the staff-room, notes in mailboxes. Marnie remarked, "What a gutsy person" (field note, February 12, 1999). She was talking of Jeanette. Marnie wanted to follow Jeanette. But Jeanette also wanted to follow Marnie in order to live her story of principal as storyteller as she felt she lived in her last school.

Trying to Begin

It was late February. I was troubled by the news. Jeanette's mom had suddenly become seriously ill and she was away from school a number of days. This family crisis was on top of the budget situation. When I first heard, I decided to drop off a casserole at her home on the weekend. Now I wanted to see her briefly before heading down to Karin's room. I wanted to make sure she was all right.

She was not all right, not really. Her mom's condition was on her mind yet as the short days of February disappeared at an alarming pace, the budget problem loomed ever larger. She was distraught. "For whatever reason they don't trust me," she said. "Some do," I replied, and she added, "Yes, a few–but not a critical mass…and I can't go with the release time thing if I don't have enough support" (field note, February 22, 1999).

She felt she was caught again. She was stuck. She felt there was not enough commitment to the release time plan to go ahead. She told me if she increased class sizes in the primaries the parents would "hit the roof" (field note, February 22, 1999). If she went with the release time plan some teachers would be unhappy. She could not run a deficit. She said she did not know what to do, morally and ethically. *She needed support for a difficult decision in a difficult circumstance. She had begun to build dialogue with some. With others she could so easily be misunderstood and she spoke of blame.* ***I remembered Karin's words. In our small group discussion at the January professional development, Karin mentioned how common it is to blame; "the world we live in" (field note, January 29, 1999). Noddings (1993) talks about the need for moral dialogue to mitigate misunderstanding. Dialogue could mitigate a world filled with blame.***

She would go over the dilemma again. She would ask staff to sit down with her to help her figure out what to do. It seemed to help the next day when she went over the numbers with Garry, the vice principal. One budget option was to have lower numbers in the primaries with release time constructed on their own, and to have higher numbers in the senior division. Another option was to keep the release time and have higher numbers in the primaries and slightly lower numbers in the senior division. They could have a combination of these two options. I was invited to sit in for more work on the plan and budget during the next week. *As a researcher, I was honoured as a participant as well as observer in the story. I thanked Jeanette for the opportunity.*

The following Monday Jeanette welcomed me to the round table in her office. Garry was already seated. She told him she did not know if she had the strength to take the three budget options to staff. She reminded him that she did not have much success with whole group meetings. She was reluctant to say something and create panic amongst the staff. Perhaps, as well, there was an outside chance of extra funding. Parents were now being publicly solicited for support throughout the system. She decided she would wait.

We reviewed the three year plan. She looked at the wording of each of the goal statements and made some minor adjustments. It was time to add an additional one, emanating from the system mandate to keep children in school longer. This goal statement was not hard. It fit with the philosophy Jeanette and the staff agreed upon–to ensure children knew what they were successful at. The indicators would be demonstrated through learning summaries, projects, and reflections. Gary mentioned the need for "quantifiable stuff" (field note, March 1, 1999).

As we talked, I noticed again the array of people in and out of Jeanette's office. Many staff were comfortable popping in to use the phone, volunteering suggestions as Jeanette asked, checking with Jeanette on forms they were working on. When we came to the goal of increasing support for public education, Jeanette jumped in, "Maybe this is where I can put my thing about how much does it cost to educate a child" (field note, March 1, 1999). ***It was another chance for Jeanette to improvise, to join in this abrupt change with her own voice. It would help her continue to author her story.***

At first I was rather quiet, listening and observing. I started to add my comments when Jeanette slid her written ideas in front of me bringing me into the conversation. We talked about setting the three year plan up as an inquiry project. Such a plan would fit with the school goal requiring each staff member to inquire into their own practices. The plan would be set up as exploring and developing questions the first year, as gathering and reflecting on data the second, and as putting something together the third. Jeanette said "they" won't like the exploring part for year one. But this is how you do research, I said. Gary mused about my "consulting fee" (field note, March 1, 1999). I was adding to the stew.

On my next visit, I picked up a copy of a newsletter to parents. It was written by a parent to inform other parents of joint meetings to be held at larger schools regarding the seriousness of the budget situation. I asked Jeanette about the meetings. I wondered if she was getting much response from parents about the situation. She said there were a couple of parents starting to notice but generally she did not think either staff or parents realized the seriousness of the situation. She was surprised that no one was questioning her about it. We wondered. I asked again about the parents. Did they seem upset?

> No they don't and I'm not getting any verbal–and I'm not picking up any ripple except they're upset about the painting–upset about the covering (chairs)…I'm hearing more of that kind of thing than I am about this she said. (taped conversation, March 5, 1999)

She talked about the "snippy remarks" she would hear (taped conversation, March 5, 1999). They were hurtful. She said that much of the display work done in the school was voluntary. Many of the people who came to the school did not have children attending but came rather to be of help to her. She said that in the last parent newsletter she put in a "thank you volunteers" to acknowledge this. She mentioned to me for the first time that many of the things, like her computer, and the colourful wooden letters and shelving she made for the school were hers personally.

She could not call a meeting every time. There seemed more than enough of these. Stories came to her with plot lines such as there would be more money for math books if they had not painted. Jeanette said she needed people, parents, staff, people downtown, to come to her with their questions. *Jeanette heard nothing. Without dialogue there could be little movement towards Jeanette, to learn her story. If they did not know her story, the silence could be filled with many stories. I thought back to Buber, (1947). A dialogic relationship occurs in conversation or in silence because the silence is not filled with another story. There is trust.*

We finished our conversation enroute to one of the senior classrooms. We talked together in the hallway outside a classroom where a supply teacher had been called in. Jeanette felt she needed to keep in touch with the situation. She needed to be near to be assured of what was going on. She would be there to help–the substitute teacher and the students if need be. *I wonder what this teacher might have thought? She only knew Jeanette as principal. She probably attended to Jeanette accordingly. Jeanette was there to evaluate, a plot line teachers are well aquainted with. She did not know Jeanette. There was no dialogue to turn attention to a different plotline. Attention remained narrow. A story was probably filled in.*

Following the weekend Jeanette found me in the teacher's workroom sorting the snow saws for Karin. Jeanette asked me to join her when I had a minute. I carried on for a short time and then brought all the saws with me into her office because I was not sure when I would have another chance to talk with her. She told me she slept all weekend. I thought, no wonder with her Mom and the budget. She told me about a meeting she would be going to at a larger school where she would present her budget to parents. Other schools in the area would present theirs as well. She was not looking forward to the meeting. I asked her again about the parents. She said that no one is talking to her. She was wondering if they agree with the cuts. I said I thought it was amazing, this silence.

There are parents who don't know Jeanette and parents who don't know teachers. It was the same sentiment expressed by the primary teachers with whom I sat at the professional development day. Teachers too were finding it difficult to know Jeanette. Karin talked about ever increasing administrivia keeping Jeanette away from them.

I came to know Karin in conversation in her classroom. I knew Jeanette from the curriculum class where we also shared conversations. Boundaries between the in and out of classroom places on the school landscape rose to separate teachers from principals. The boundaries were not physically but rather socially constructed to keep everyone in their place. That was how school worked. How could you get to really know anyone in this situation? I recalled Jeanette's remarks about the rainbows and teddy bears around the school. She said perhaps these displays were the way to make herself known in a staff of thirty.

To truly know someone you have to know their story. It is a much deeper knowing reminding me of the attending needed. Bateson (1994) talks about attending as caring. She, like Greene (1995) talk about the need to attend more fully. Noddings (1993) and Buber (1947) talk about dialogue as the essence of the caring relationship and Clandinin and Connelly (1995) and Dewey (1938) talk about sustained conversation, continuity and responsive community. I now understand a much richer sense of 'story to live by'. A 'story to live by', the one that dwells in your heart, must be cherished by a responsive community to become strong and grow. I wonder if a 'a story to live by'could fill the silence so trust could be created?

When I visited with Jeanette the following week in March she told me issues around teacher-directed education were coming to the fore again. I was also hearing the stories from Karin. Letters had been sent downtown despite Jeanette's request to meet and talk about it. Jeanette was frustrated with what she saw as lack of will on the parents' parts to get together on the topic. She was not against parents. Just this week she felt she took a position favoring a parent's point of view rather than a teacher's. She continued to ask for meetings. Eventually, she did meet with parents. She felt it was all one way. Jeanette said she talked about her child centred philosophy for an hour and a half. She said, for example, that 100% on a spelling test was easier and faster to achieve than correct spelling in writing. That took much longer. There were few questions. The meeting was not a conversation.

The response from downtown was to point out other schools that might fit better with the parent's philosophy. Again there was no conversation. The response tugged at her. *She lived in a consumer choice political landscape and saying what you believed in seemed to lead only to a 'take it' or 'leave it' response. Saying what you believed in would be construed as the end of a conversation, not as a beginning. I wondered about attending to each other?* ***How different consumer choice is from choosing to create community.***

How different turning away in silence is to sustained conversation including different points of view for richer meaning. How limiting for an educative community.

A few days later, at Karin's request, I was tacking snowsaws and the snow building photos on the walls that encircled the hallway pit outside the primary classrooms. Karin, along with the other primary teachers, wanted to use the pit as part of the upcoming Open House celebration of learning. While I was busily covering the half walls, Jeanette came by to let me know about her meeting with trustees the previous day. Each principal had about five minutes to present their schools budget plans she said.

She said in her years as a principal this budget plan was the one of which she was least proud. She said it was "so depressing". There seemed to be "no enthusiasm", "no new ideas", "no energy" in the plans presented. The plans seemed only to reflect the "status quo" (field note, March 16, 1999). She found the meeting so upsetting because no conversation around pedagogy was taking place. She felt there was a push towards sameness of content. She was concerned she had lost her ability to connect with these people, the people responsible for putting policies in place to satisfy certain stakeholders.

She spoke in soft tones but she was forceful in her telling, "It's not what, it's how" (March 16, 1999). She said that she could choose Swahili for the content. The content did not matter as much as how the learning happened–the learning situation. *She was interested in the learning quality, its educative quality (Dewey, 1938). Her comments reminded me of the research project work I did. I was remembering Danny, a little boy I worked with when I was both a resource teacher and learning resources teacher (teacher-librarian). He had a history of having a difficult time in school. He chose a research project around coal mining because his father had been a coal miner. He created a board game to play with other children and to show what he learned. He just beamed at our celebration day.* ***Retelling this story now, Danny poured his heart and soul into the project. He was determined to read and write with whatever help he could get. He was***

improvising because of his passion. A story he was authoring was coming to life and the story was receiving response from others.

In response to her ideas about 'what' and 'how' I shared my reflections about 'tell' and 'let'. I said I thought 'tell' happened in hierarchical arrangements. We have learned that those in authority tell. Traditionally authority has been hierarchically arranged. Having fewer people as authors is less complicated, less time consuming. But authority can come from everyone if we are allowed to live out and tell our own story. We author when we are able to let our story be, when we are able to contribute our own story to create community. I thought that being told means there is no real responsibility, no need to think and so no need to communicate. Whereas I thought that with 'let' the personal responsibility, the authority, would ensure a need to think and be morally accountable. ***Like Jeanette I was talking about letting people be.***

As we returned in conversation to the present situation in the school, she said she would not dictate the release time plan. Agreement to the plan was still a question mark. She wondered why she was trying to do this. She felt alone. She said she was expected to fix things "but I can't do it all myself" (field note, March 16, 1999). Her voice trembled and tears were in her eyes as she stood on one side of the pit wall with me on the other.

Later in the morning I checked at her office on my way out of the school. As we stood together in the doorway she looked at me and said in a flood of passion.

> It was not what we did (at her last school) but how we did it. Somehow we found ways to use the hallways, staff room, library to talk about what we could do for kids. I can't do that here… everyone's in their classrooms. (field note, March 16, 1999)

She told me some of the teachers were talking about straight grades for next year. This plan would mean other teachers would have huge difficulties in terms of class sizes. If this happens, she said she would leave. We walked and talked through the hallway to the front door. The conversation was intense. We talked about ways to approach learning that might include all children. I noticed that our *vibrant thread of conversation winding through the out of classroom places must have been the kind of conversation Jeanette wanted.*

That night I found a card for Jeanette and wrapped up an inukshuk key holder I bought a while back. On the card I thanked her for teaching me about the meaning of moral imagination. I gave the card and gift to her on my next visit. She was touched. There were hugs. “Where did you get it?” she asked (field note, March 19, 1999).

Changes were beginning to happen. Some teachers were planning to leave at the end of June. Some parents were choosing to pull their children out. *Did the changes start with Jeanette? Of late, Jeanette had taken a stand on things. She believed in child-centred learning and that children should work in their success range.* ***She had, perhaps, become easier to recognize, but it was setting up the duality–to follow Jeanette or not. The landscape would divide and narrow, limiting participation. Yet Jeanette, since the beginning tried to begin a conversation, in so doing expand the space, creating a place for different points of view.***

It was always back and forth. There had been some positive response with the release time plan. Jeanette told me teachers were talking about centres and the idea of using the pit seating area, hallways and library spaces for some of the combined class activities. I wondered if teachers were feeling safer to come out of their classrooms. I imagined the possibilities of teachers working in sight of each other. Thinking of Karin’s practice, I said there were wonderful things happening in classrooms yet others don’t know. Jeanette said she also often doesn’t know.

Penguins and snow were giving way to spring flowers in Karin’s class. During a preparation time late in March Karin and I sat down at the staff room table to cut parts for the daisy flower craft that afternoon. We decided to bring materials to the staff room so we could talk while cutting. Jeanette walked in and joined the conversation. We were talking about portfolios. Jeanette talked about the portfolios as a record a child could have if moving schools. Children could easily share school stories in their portfolios. Telling and retelling their portfolio stories would be affirming, contributing to their own knowing of themselves as learners. Karin brought up the concern that some children should, and would, like to take things home. We talked of digital photography and scanning. Karin was currently taking a photography course. Jeanette offered the idea of a CD of each child's school life. *The conversation was 'teacher talk'–the kind to sustain and nourish a 'story to live by'.* ***Dewey (1916) saw the responsive community as essential to nurture the social life in the same way as food and water nurtured and sustained the body.***

Our conversation continued. Karin said that in the Open House, Kelly who felt successful in math could choose to take his parents to that area first. "It would set a positive tone," I added (field note, March 23, 1999). I remarked how Karin's room was packed to brimming, with displays, with children's literature, with cozy seating, materials and art supplies for creating. The classroom itself told something of who Karin was. It would be important for parents to see this. Jeanette agreed that seeing the classroom gave a better picture of the situation.

We talked about the problem of pinpointing progress to marks on a progress report without accounting for the lived experience. Jeanette then shared a story of her son Bruce. She said that if he has difficulty reading he tells her it is all right because a friend will read for him. *I thought about our son Matthew. He loves to be with people. He wants to communicate with them. What would happen given the situation with his severe speech difficulties if there had been only one way to communicate.* ***There is a pattern becoming visible in these stories–desire and commitment leading to improvisation to sustain a 'story to live by'. But to do this, to participate, a larger more expansive world would be needed, not a more narrow one.***

Jeanette talked about the need to know children. Knowing children well would give a teacher more places to connect with them. Knowing children more fully would allow teachers to help children connect to their passions, increasing their chances of feeling successful. Karin commented she was getting to know the children who were builders in her room during 'choice time'. She was getting to know their stories. As Karin and I walked back through the hallways to class I remarked on the wonderful poetry café one of the teachers set up in the hallway. You would likely never know this was going on if the café was just kept in the classroom. We could begin to know the teacher better. She agreed.

March was going out like a lamb. Indira, a little girl from India in Karin's class, had been so exquisitely excited that the green would come back to the trees. It had been her first Canadian winter. It was hard to say my 'official' good byes to the children. I would keep in touch with Karin and Jeanette in the weeks and months to come. I could leave the school but I could not leave the story. I planned, with Jeanette, to drop by some Friday mornings, to attend some special school events and to sit in on team planning meetings for next year if it was all right with Karin.

Jeanette shared with me how tired she was. She was tired of being buffeted. "I like to stay in here–it's safe," she spoke quietly of her teddy bear office (field note, March 24,1999). Perhaps I might want to think of the ending of this story as a plan for a new beginning she said. *I thought, the story was not ending, just my official research time in the school. Was the adventure just beginning for Jeanette? Joy, dreaming and hope amidst ever present danger and difficulties. Would there be enough fellow companions to join together with her? Would they be ready to once again begin?*

CHAPTER 8: GATHERING AROUND–CONSTRUCTING THE CRAZY QUILT

Narrative Encounter–Karin–Jeanette–Pam–Fall 1999

This chapter is a narrative account around the meeting where all three of us gathered to share conversation and reflect on the stories of Jeanette and Karin's experiences in the in and out of classroom places on the school landscape, during the second year of Jeanette's arrival at the school as principal. The chapter is composed from field notes, transcribed conversation and artifacts and my own personal journal entries, including poetry I composed. The chapter contains alternative forms of representation of the events and conversation of the meeting through found poetry and a story cloth installation (Figure 1). I include poems I composed (Figures 2 and 3) conveying emerging understandings in the study. The poems reflect what is hard to say in words. As the poet says, "Poetry is the algebra of the heart" (E.E. Cummings, p. 74, in Barry, 1993).

feeling the rain drops
I see you for the first time
A flower growing
(Steeves, 1999)

Driving around in my car, I looked down at my watch. It was 2:03 on Wednesday afternoon. I counted the days to our December meeting. This is what we set up at the beginning of my research–what we all agreed on. I wanted it to go well. I wanted it to be special. But I didn't know. Oh please…

I thought back to the hands, the ones I imagined in my proposal. They were open but cupped to hold something, something so fragile. Now I thought we are holding people's lives in the three dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The three dimensional inquiry space is the field I play in, the space that makes room for imagination and relationship by allowing travel in many directions. The space allows full participation in the experience. I keep in mind the inner feelings, the outer social situation, the temporal dimensions of past present and future and the specific place of my inquiry. I must be so careful. I must be so thoughtful. Narrative inquiry requires my full attention.

Tension and negotiation are ever present because "relationship is key to what it is that narrative inquirers do" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I am ever mindful of my relationships with Karin and Jeanette. Throughout the lengthy research time I have treaded lightly. As I composed the chronicles I brought them to Jeanette and Karin for response. I enjoyed the opportunity for reflection at this preliminary stage.

In response to reading a chronicle of our first time together, Jeanette talked to me about her need for hope. The chronicles were sometimes difficult to read. I told her that when I wrote the stories I wanted to 'pull her through'. Jeanette's response showed me that the stories I would compose would be much more than a mere listing of events. I was reminded that in composing stories I would have to work as hard as I could to evoke the tone and feelings embodied in experiences. I thought, there is no hope in a listing of events. Following Tappan and Brown (1991) I see how a story is much more because my moral imagination is inserted when as a teller, I construct the story. I thought of Sewell (1997) who says story is the "spirit that carries us from day to day". It seems that hope lies in story.

Sharing the layered chronicles with Karin sparked her to say she missed our time together to talk about educational matters close to our hearts. She said, "Teachers regularly share classroom stories with each other to help and support each other, but two teachers sharing the same story and then reflecting on/about it is a different form of support–the growth potential for the teachers is phenomenal" (written response to chronicle, July, 1999).

I realized how I, too, wanted to keep connected with Jeanette and Karin, to continue our conversations where our stories could merge and grow. Although my official research time within the school was drawing to a close, I began, in late spring, to write stories of experience, (my Chapters Four through Seven) while at the same time bringing further chronicles for sharing. I also dropped by the school for special events. I attended, for example, the art auction and the meeting of the primary teachers to discuss release time plans for the following year.

Narrative inquiry relationships are sustained over a long period of time. The closeness that developed made it easier to say what was on our minds. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest a kind of intimacy with the situation develops for both inquirer and participant as they begin to take the same things for granted. I found this to be so. When I returned to school to visit with her, Karin continued an earlier conversation about her grandmother. She told me that as a child she had been told never to complain, that she never could 'have it as bad' as her pioneer grandmother. Thinking about our research relationship she told me initially she hesitated in taking part in my research, because of the way it was viewed by some as 'aligning' herself with Jeanette. She did not have to say more. I was picking up the threads of previous stories. Laying a story of never complaining beside stories of competition in the 'out of classroom place' created greater insight with which to think about the situation.

At the same time as Karin told me about these stories, I noticed new stories trying to emerge. There seemed to be a kind of back and forthing when I thought about the 'out of classroom place' in school. The art auction was a spectacular success. Jeanette thought it contributed to a new story of school composed by she and staff together. She was happy. The out of classroom places, the halls, gym and library, were crammed with art work of all kinds. It had been planned by one of the groups of teachers as their school wide contribution, just as the measurement stations and building units were in the previous months.

The primary team meetings in the spring to figure out a release time plan were also promising. Jeanette asked me to go if it was all right with Karin. I sat in wonder at the genuine excitement at imagining how they might do this. The meeting was high spirited and playful. Imagination was alive. There was talk of extended family for the children, and painting classroom doors in rainbow colours. They were not sure how they would make the changes but they would figure the release time changes out. I thought of improvisation.

In the fall of 1999, I arranged to do some volunteer work in the school library for one morning a week. I enjoyed the chance to be with children and being there was important to my writing. The life at school was energizing. I was able to keep in touch with Jeanette and Karin as I brought my writing (Chapters Three to Seven) in for response. I was always conscious of the way Jeanette and Karin gave so much of their time to me. They were often not able to respond to my writing until weeks passed. But I was able to stay connected as I saw myself as being, once again, 'a helpful person' in the school.

Just as I revealed how my knowing shifted over time through the narrative braiding within my stories (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 1997), Jeanette and Karin also viewed their stories slightly differently over time. Jeanette, for example, said that reading the stories helped her realize the amount of change there had been. The distance created over time gave her a better perspective of the situation. She said the stories were often hard for her to read because they brought back her frustration of working with what she had on the one hand and thinking about how she would like the school to be on the other. She said at the time, because she did have to come in everyday, she did not allow herself to fully experience the situation in the way she was able to now.

Before I had my first conversation about the first set of stories with Karin, in September, she stopped me in the hallway on one of my volunteer days at the school. She said how much it meant to her that I captured what she was trying to do in her class. She had tears in her eyes and I was so touched. Reading the stories of last year made her think of the contrasts to her present year experiences. She told me that her afternoon of art is not possible because other curricular considerations had taken over. She felt her concerns expressed at team meetings had been bypassed. It was hard for me to hear this, much harder now because I knew something of Karin's story. I knew what Karin cared about, and, perhaps by reading my stories, she allowed herself to more deeply appreciate this too. For both Jeanette and Karin, my retelling of their stories of experience seemed to have contributed to a more profound knowing of the situation.

In all this, I was writing from the positions they were in. I was writing from an 'in classroom place' with Karin and an 'out of classroom place' with Jeanette. Soon an additional part of my research would unfold–the sharing of Jeanette's and Karin's stories with each other. Our three way meeting would highlight the landscape where Jeanette's and Karin's stories were situated. The spatial perspective from these two places would be known by each of them through the sharing of the stories.

What would they say I wondered? In theory, this is what dialogue is about. It is the sharing of points of view (Greene, 1995, Noddings, 1993, Buber, 1947) in a trusting relationship. In the research Jeanette, Karin and I would share, perspectives from different narrative histories, from different times and places would come together. Dewey (1916) wrote about the responsive community, as necessary to sustain a social life as food and water are to sustain our physical lives. I thought about a place where people are safe to be; a gift of grace where we are safe to both stumble and to reveal our deepest desires.

I came to know such a place. It is the Centre for Research for Teacher Education. In this place we are invited around a large gathering table. Like a kitchen table we come to tell stories of our lives. A plate of cookies makes us feel at home. Wayne brought his touchstone inviting stories as it is passed around. Debbie reads a favourite book of children's literature. Janice brought some writing for response. Jean leans forward inviting everyone to talk. Sunlight streams through windows to light up paintings, photos and tiny flags on a large world map, mementos of those who have gone before and left footprints. Attending to people's storied lives is first and foremost in this place. We are safe to talk about what matters to us. We feel others in their listening and response. In this place it is the caring community that creates the nest so we can grow. It is the responsive community that links us to each other so we can fly.

Casey (1996) says places take on the quality of the people living in them. He says that places "happen" (p. 27). I imagined a safe place to listen to the stories in our hearts, to put our stories out for view, and to help them grow. If people are this willing to do this, then trust has been built. Will response to the sharing of different perspectives be that of love, of trying to understand difference, of valuing uniqueness? This was my hope.

I used the metaphor of the making of a crazy quilt to conceptualize the gathering of the three of us. I wanted to suggest the possibility of an educative responsive community where we gather in conversation around a piece of work we are creating. In the meeting the story pieces are laid out and the possibility of creating a larger story quilt is imagined through retelling in sight of each other. New pieces are imagined through attending to what is already there, our lives so far. In this way our 'stories to live by' can continue. Our stories are fed by the responsive community and so there is a continuing sense of possibility, a continuing sense of hope.

I made arrangements for the meeting at my house. A date was chosen and a supply teacher was called on for Karin. I was aware of the amount of time they had already given me and how busy they both were. I planned to drop off a complete set of stories (Chapters Four to Seven) for each of them at school at the end of the week so they could be read over the weekend. Jeanette said she and Karin would come together in her car. That is when I began to worry. What would they talk about as they drove to my house? What if? What if? Shouldn't I be there? Should I phone Jeanette and ask that she and Karin arrive separately? But then it struck me. There was probably a reason why Jeanette wanted to bring Karin in her car. Thinking only of the research I would have opted for the separate arrival but I realized I needed to attend first to Jeanette and Karin. I would not distance myself from them as researcher on a higher plateau. We shared common ground. Like each of them, I ,too, would do the best I could in the situation. I would work with what I had.

The time came. Greeting Jeanette and Karin at the door with hugs and laughter already dispelled some of the tension I felt. We gathered around the dining room table at my house, each with a folder of stories and snippets of cloth. A larger piece of warm brown felt cloth took up the middle space. The cloth was an invitation to story. I purposely cut the felt in an imperfect square shape. I wanted it to look unfinished, like narrative inquiry–under construction (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). That way I imagined how the story could continue, with ragged edges showing. I wanted the quilt to look handmade.

We were all a bit nervous as we sat together at the table waiting for our conversation to begin. Karin pulled The Quilt Makers Gift, (Brumbeau, 2000) out of her bag. The illustrations were stunning and we all suddenly had something to talk about. We began to feel at ease. Karin offered to bring the book that day. Her offer showed me the interdependent way our research relationship unfolded amongst the three of us. The research was not all up to me. We started by reading the story in a 'round', passing it amongst us. Our reading together set the tone for our attending. I thanked them for coming, for attending to me and to each other. The meeting was something I would never forget.

I first wondered about their reactions to each other's stories–what struck each of them initially. Thinking of the three dimensional inquiry space I was most conscious of the place dimension, between Karin living in the 'in classroom place' and Jeanette living in the 'out of classroom place'. The tone in Jeanette and Karin's stories were so different. Karin began. What follows is a found poem. (Chapter Two, p. 51)

I found a moral as well as intellectual and emotional intensity were more readily revealed through the poetic form. Throughout the found poetry pieces contained in this chapter, I used different font devices to show the different voices. Karin's voice is represented in the regular font style. Jeanette's voice is represented in italics and my voice is represented in a bold italic font. I arranged words and phrases to depict the commitment and passion of the tellers. Silence, pauses and the interactive nature of the conversation was represented through combining ideas within lines and between stanzas to become part of the telling. Both Jeanette and Karin use metaphor in their conversation to evoke ideas and images. I believe, as does Richardson (1997), that "We become the metaphors that we use. We construct worlds in our metaphoric image" (p. 185). It was, therefore, vitally important to care for metaphors, to polish them and make them shine.

Poem in Two Voices

You know I journal…I think I'll go back and see…
I thought our stories would be very different

Whether you knew it or not, I was watching
Being in the out of classroom
I had a little more time to do that
To dip my finger in...to make sure you were ok
Trying to monkey with the traditions of the school

And when I looked at the two stories
It had played itself out
You coming to the school was liberating
But for you it was the opposite

One of the first things I noticed were voices
Voices that were silenced
That didn't say anything at staff meetings
And voices that were heard
Strong voices that swayed

I have to admit to being a silent voice
And I know why...it's very hard
It's hard to be a lone voice
It is ...It is...

And there are many times I just haven't said anything
I do that too…I go to silence

Because I'm tired of the…
Because I think I can't deal with this right now
Yes

It's fascinating to me how you keep going
When you get to the end of the day
When you get to the end of the week
And say–I can't do this anymore

We started this conversation before and I thought about it all weekend
And I read your story and I read mine
Maybe in a way
Mine is easier to sustain hope

It's like a pond…my little classroom separated from everybody else
I drop a pebble in
our circle of influence kind of ripples out
here's yours over here and you impact those closest to you
and here's mine

In the classroom you see and touch the same people
everyday
you see the joys and the sorrows
everyday
where I don't have that same kind of sphere

You get the edges of everybody's circle
Some days I didn't have the rock to make the ripple

But that circle…a close group of people
Because we grew up together
Because we began together
It didn't matter what we got ourselves into

I had that group of people
There for me in
The way the kids are there for you
In the classroom

After the conversation I captured as Poem in Two Voices, the conversation moved to a retelling of the story of trying to build community in the school. Karin's strong sense of the need for children to belong and be part of a community in the classroom meets

Jeanette's notion that everyone working in a school needs to feel included. Jeanette speaks to the slow and halting journey towards a belonging place for all.

Inching Towards Community

I think every year is a new beginning
And I know that in my classroom it takes till Christmas
Creating community in the classroom
But we don't allow ourselves …
One of the things we did this year
The work…the painting …for a little while I smiled
Because I thought–we've started a community here
But it lasted for such a short time
Three Septembers ago we never would have painted
And we've read more stories this year
And the P.D. day–everyone spoke
It happens and then it stops.
You keep trying to add a different wrinkle
But it's so easy to fall back to what we know
The sense of belonging–the sense of continuity
All of these important things–and those things were like
Phht–we got to teach math…we got to teach
We never get into the discussion of kids
But there are pockets of things
Pockets of community
And the pockets change
Depending on what you're talking about
When I walked through the door
A long time ago
It was competitive
Those threads are still there
There is also the thread that allows you
To do things you couldn't have done before
Taking the release time out of it's traditional form
It helped a little bit
We've lost a lot too
I'm starting to feel again
Like the oddball in the crowd
Not as odd as me Karin
But if there was a community
You can't point a finger
It's a problem the community has to resolve

And I'm trying to think of a way
To ask for a rethinking
It's been on my mind
I could do it…I could say
I've been wondering…

In this piece I used devices such as page layout of text to convey ideas. I wanted to show the back and forth movement of the lived stories experienced by Jeanette first hand. In this way I showed the rhythmic sense (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986) in which Jeanette knows this experience and the way she tries to support and encourage Karin to continue in hope. I continued to learn more as I noted the way Karin spoke in terms of 'we' as she talked about efforts to build community in the school. I recalled her conversations earlier (p. 136) when she talked of changes in the school that 'they' made. Community building in the 'out of classroom place' of school, experienced by Karin as halting, was something of which she felt included now. Using 'we' was a little thing but a big thing.

Soon it was 'quilt time'. We looked down at our fabric pieces. I had written a note to Jeanette and Karin to ask each of them to bring small fabric scraps to our meeting, to represent their own stories. I included two snippets of my own story coat for each of them, symbolizing for me the relational way I was involved. I already talked to each of them about the way I was imagining my research and this three way get together so I included a written piece I composed about crazy quilts.

For the meeting, I bought some extra bits of fabric which I left in a basket for their use. I provided scissors and quilting pins to assemble the pieces. Through the metaphorical representation of the crazy quilt, we would work in sight of each other. We each were vulnerable. Only the trusting relationship would make it safe. It was a surprise to me that Jeanette and Karin each started cutting shaped pieces to represent ideas. I placed the pieces on the soft brown felt cloth with my pins.

I thought about the crazy quilt metaphor. With a crazy quilt, in striving for a harmonious whole, attention must be paid to what has gone before. As one piece is laid down, it shapes the nature of the next piece to be laid. To do this, the work requires improvisation. It is a way of working that allows for participation and a sense of harmony in a situation of constant change. I found this way of working present in our three way get together.

Figure 1. Story Cloth Photograph

Pinned Pieces

I brought this
A piece from his first quilt
Only knowing him–His love for trucks
Would you understand

He's what sustained me
I kept using his perspective
How he made sense of things
To wonder…to say

So we'll start with that piece there

I tried to find something for both my girls
Because all that I do
And why I became a teacher
Is because of them

It was because of them
So I had to find a piece of fabric
The first smock I made
Joining because they're sisters

I want your piece to touch Jeanette's piece…your children
Our children

This is a piece of the ancient tartan
Family and weaving
Dark green and navy
Worn by the Seaforth Highlanders of the Queen's guard

That's nice…the heart shape
We could have another heart–We could have lots of hearts

That's really what this is all about

You asked me about rainbows
The rainbow that hangs in my room
I made that
For my sister…the baby…

And then it became mine

For my classroom
I brought the pieces…the puppet theatre…the rainbows
Part of my whole spectrum of kids

Oh I like that…Lets see
What's this?

This is…This is the colour
That dusty rose
That is in both the sunrise and sunset
All…year…long

That regardless of the day
There is still the opportunity
The day will end and another will begin
The rhythm

That's kind of like hope
And these are…the sun rays
I like your sun rays
reaching out to touch the children

How is it that as educators we got ourselves trapped?
To take heart…to take passion
Out of what we do
If we really believed…the kids would learn …the kids would think about

Yeah

This is the log cabin
The home that my mother was born into
And my grandmother lived in
And you know how my grandmother has been hugely…

I brought this
Symbolic of our construction
But it's more than a snowman
It's the building

Trying to figure out how you do that
You just have to keep trying–keep trying

Our work

Our belief
To keep trying
And there's never an answer

I love the idea of an enterprise
There's something about the person within an enterprise

The position of having the answer
The only answer
The whole school–putting me in
If I could just–I don't know

I can believe you
We don't have the answers for everything
We just don't
It's not easy

The snowman's arms
Reaching out for a hug
He doesn't need a face does he?

He's 'everyman's' snowman

And on the playground
Jon said
Could you please put your arms around me
One more time

I'm wondering if I could make you a border of children
I looked at the fabric
Their little faces
Cause that's what we learned all about

Oh that reminds me
We forgot
I forgot
The teddy bear fabric

Oh Jeanette, its integral
Yeah
We need a teddy bear on there
We'll put it on Thursday

I just feel we are doing so many of the wrong things
In education right now
Attending to too many of the wrong things
It will pass–it will

But…
I wonder what damage it does in passing

We need another border
Here…over here
Otherwise it looks like
There are pieces missing

And we don't want
Missing pieces………………… *missing children*
No that's not what we want
Well that's what we have

I like that they're all holding hands too
I put my hand on the back
That's a good idea–we should put two
Three…three hands…this makes three little hands

There's Jody…Is she happy this year?
Think so
She's coming along well?
*She's o.k………………*Sigh

I wonder how I'm going to sew this?
Because we want to have the overlapping
the overlapping is important
And I don't know if that normally happens with quilts

This isn't normal–This is unique–Unto itself

You know how we built things out of sticks
I didn't want it constructed
Just a little pile of sticks
To mess around with

When you looked at this you thought of sameness
But when I looked–I thought
Now there's a bumpy road

Because you know…it's not smooth going

Where should we put the bumpy road?
With the log house
Yes that works… and Jeanette there…it's pioneer stuff
Called them corduroy roads didn't they?

What's this Jeanette?

Kite…it's a kite
We have to have a little piece with lace
Very fragile…and there's history
I'll just put a few ribbons on the tail
Because a kite won't fly without a tail

Oh isn't this beautiful
The frame–so many colours
It just sort of sets everything off
A soft frame…a flexible frame

It's something I so much want to do
To build a frame
A frame in which we can work
But right now we have nothing framing us

Feeling like you're in a pinball machine
When you don't have a frame
Bouncing around
"That sounds like a good idea"

And every new resource
Every new thing
That's ever come out
Is at the school……………Is at the school

How do I make a book out of this piece?
Or a journal?
Because sometimes we need to sit back
And think about what we are doing

The journal to talk about the story
This is a story coat…what they wear in Africa
And they tell stories

It's like wisdom
It fits with school as a place to make memories
Cause then you have the stories to tell
And triggers that you need
To sustain you

Maybe…
If we use the quilt next year we can…
We can start to talk
About the frame

Hmm Hmm

Well that's beautiful…Thank you so much…wow

Through poetic form I captured the power of voice. Because Jeanette and Karin spoke passionately I showed the communal nature of our meeting through using different fonts for different voices. I hoped I would be able to honour more fully the voices of Jeanette and Karin, the authentic conversation in a responsive community. I was searching for a more dialogic mode of representation (Atkinson, 1992). Using three different fonts, often represented visually in the same stanza, showed the interrelated nature of dialogue as unique voices come together to talk about an idea. Looking at the visual images of the words on the pages I imagined inukshuks. I imagined them as a guide bringing me back to people, symbolic of all those who have gone before. I believe an inukshuk captures the spirit of our conversation–to continue to try, to move towards, facing hardships, perhaps as pioneers, but the need to do this…together.

Next, it was time to move away from this table and to sit down for the lunch I prepared for us. I kept my tape recorder running as a conversation arose between Jeanette and Karin in response to a proposed standardized report card touted as being able to give a sense of continuity from school to school. The conversation led to reflection and wonders about what learning and school might mean for children. Both Jeanette and Karin thought of other ways to assess learning in a manner that attended to continuity of a developing 'story to live by' for the children. Karin and Jeanette had different points of view, but there was listening and response in the kind of dialogue that Noddings describes. She says, “Dialogue…is different from debate. Its purpose is not to win but to work through the problem at hand…” (1993, p. 12).

Teacher Talk

Student led conferences
The families–how much they enjoyed it
The value they got
But I can’t do them all–I have to decide

The portfolio thing
I’d really like to spend some time
Talking about it
Why we want it? What we’re going to do with it?

I read back the story–CD’s and stuff
Because then it wouldn’t be…
I have a problem
Keeping the best work of the kids too?

In my mind
A portfolio demonstrates what a child can do
Overtime–so when it’s growth
Not always does their best work go in

It’s not teacher directed though
That’s why, I’m having a problem
Why should I decide
What goes in there?

We see different value in different pieces
“I think that one has to go in
Because it shows how hard you worked
How much change you’ve made”

They have to own it...it’s a reflection
Every portfolio may be...
No should be...
Different

And your portfolios Karin
Have to be a reflection of your classroom
Your exploration time, your response to story and art
Different from Laurie and Sue's

See–we need to have this conversation

As with the 'quilt', children bordered the frame for this authentic conversation between Jeanette and Karin. Attending to children's lives was the common project. Jeanette and Karin had differing ideas about what to use for evaluation but each felt safe to voice their ideas in genuine dialogue. This did not mean there could not be tension. Within this responsive community, each of Jeanette's and Karin's voices could be recognized. I wanted to sensitively represent the emotional 'give and take' of the conversation. Using stanzas with different fonts highlighted the differences while the poetic form highlighted the wholeness–the common frame.

I looked at the clock. "Do you realize what the time is?" I said while we were still eating. No one had been counting the minutes. Jeanette thought she talked too much. Karin complimented me on my homemade frittata as she got up from the table. They bundled up and headed off in Karin's car. There was still a full afternoon of school that day. Through the window I watched them pull away.

And then I danced. I was exhilarated. I loved our time together. I cleared off the table and found a small piece of rolled up paper Karin had been twirling in her fingers while she spoke. I attached it to the 'quilt'. I thought of creative tension. Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997), in speaking about collaborative work say, "Not too comfortable seems to be a fruitful condition for calling forth each other's best energies" (p. 308).

I wondered what to do with our quilt. It was not really a quilt. What should I do with all the pins? I carefully wrapped it up and over the next few days I brought it out triumphantly to show people. I asked co-researchers what they might think. I spoke of it as another retelling (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Jeanette called it a story cloth. Jean suggested leaving the pins in for a while. Karin called it one of a kind–unique. I started to think of it as a kind of art installation because for me it conveyed a sense of ceremony. I have learned there is no real definition; but rather there is a sense that an installation "transforms a space" (Robèrt, personal communication, April 20, 2000). I saw it representing a space we created together.

Like the stories, layered chronicles, and found poetry, the story cloth installation was another contribution. I was encouraged "to use the forms that are available and to extend, mold or break them in ways that make sense for the particular work in which you are engaged" (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 1997, p. 152). I noted, for example, how often Jeanette's fabric pieces alluded to ideas and beliefs not storied on this school landscape. Karin's pieces expressed much of the story we experienced together in her classroom. It made me think about 'a story to live by' and be-longing, a 'story to live by' that longs to be.

I began to see a purpose in leaving the pins on. The message would "preserve the sense of exploration and the precariously provisional nature of human understanding" (Atkinson, 1992, p. 43). Pinning rather than affixing would make sense in trying to embrace multiplicity of perspectives over time and place (Greene, 1995). My participation again became more visible in acknowledging the story can be told or pinned in different ways depending on who is doing the telling or the pinning. There is a sense the story could be told otherwise (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). There is the sense that this is the story 'for now'. It is not finished.

There were other ways our 'crazy quilt' echoed story. The fabric pieces overlapped to display the intermingling of lives and ideas. Stories from the past overlapped with stories from the present and hopes for the future as, for example, Karin and Jeanette's own children figured prominently in their thinking about their own ways of teaching and learning. Assembling cut-out hands on the story cloth allowed me to depict the relationship amongst our own and the children's hands. Just as the pieces touched and overlapped, we learned from each other. The quilt showed the life giving quality of our community to awaken us to new meaning. I heard the storyteller's words once more, "For as stories depend on stories, lives depend on lives. Contact and continuity are essential links in the long chain of human culture" (Yolen, 1981, p.19).

Our three way meeting was a place of story. The fabric pieces brought to the table were further shaped and brought to life by the moral imagination of the tellers. It was a place of safety, connection, passion and honour; a sacred place in the way Laurel Richardson describes (1997, p. 185). I believed Dewey (1938) would see it as a responsive community. I saw it as a place to belong, where 'a story to live by' can come home. It was a place where conversation connected to its etymological root in community and transformation. It was a place of celebration.

I end this chapter with a found poem created with phrases from each of the three of us at this meeting. The poem speaks to educational beliefs we each hold. Three different voices are braided together in this poem affirming our uniqueness. In displaying uniqueness our community becomes richer. We all see more. We are transformed.

Affirmation–Conversation in Three Voices

Journals
They are so valuable
We're supposed to prepare these students
For the changing–for thinking

A story
Making stories if you have the memory
And you call upon them
To help you

Curriculum
A spiral starting flat
But if you start to pull the threads
You get the depth

Crazy Quilt Inquiry Space

A bag of jumbles
Which will I take out?–looking in
How will I place them?–looking out
What's there already?–looking back
What goes next?–looking forward

Gathering round–To Share our pieces
Conversation–Stories
Attending to each other
Binding
Not too tight
Not too loose
Just the right tension

(Steeves, 1999)

Figure 2.

A Parade

March

line

following

leader

order

tell

sameness

rigid

scripted steps

keeping your place

replace

looking straight ahead

let

Dance

curves

join

swirl

spirit

unique

fluid

improvise

round about

evolve

looking at each other

Attending to what?

(Steeves, 1999)

Figure 3.

CHAPTER 9: STITCHING THE PATTERNS

Narrative Appreciation

"Save your opinions for your quilt.
Put your heart and voice into it"
(Otto, 1991, p.14)

This chapter reveals themes worthy of consideration in-forming appreciation of continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and a principal in a school at a time of principal arrival at the school. My appreciation illuminates the situation from a narrative perspective, that is, I take into account, the three dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Following Dewey (1938), Clandinin and Connelly describe the dimensions as personal and social (interaction), past, present and future (continuity), and the notion of place (situation). At any given moment, all the dimensions comprise the situation. The stories, found poetry and the story cloth installation, created from lived experiences, are the sources from which I composed the themes. The themes show my knowing "threaded through other layers of experience" (Bateson, 1994, p. 10).

> *I wish now to embroider my metaphorical crazy quilt with patterns that I see. The reader is invited to look at these. It is acknowledged that there could be other patterns, because readers too have their own perspectives. I begin by choosing the brightest vermillion red. It is for me the heart of the story and so I will embroider hearts on my quilt...it is what we have attended to.*

A 'Story to Live By': Karin

Karin, for the most part, was able to bring 'her story to live by' to her classroom. It was there she felt safe to attend to, and express, what she believed in her heart. Karin believed in attending first to children in a holistic way. She constructed curriculum around the children's experiences to allow the children and herself to build a caring community in the classroom, one where all children could participate. In Karin's practice, she saw the classroom community was enriched by the unique differences and contributions of each child. Like Dewey's (1934) theory of art and experience Karin pressed her 'story to live by' into her practice vitalizing her 'personal practical knowledge' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), bringing her practice to life. Karin's passion and commitment to children and her classroom community were enacted. Learning shimmered as the light reflected from Karin's heart touched the children.

Karin's 'story to live by' was revealed so explicitly for example in the way the children and Karin created the penguin unit together (see Chapter Six). Puppet plays initiated by the children, the jointly constructed bulletin board and detailed penguin paintings expressed the children's learning from each other and from Karin. Concepts such as the need to belong and to feel successful were woven into these activities. Her classroom 'open house' in March was the culminating celebration for the units. Karin was able to honour her beliefs in multiple literacy, open ended approaches and celebration in learning, through art activities ,'choice time' and the 'open house' activities she initiated in her classroom. Her philosophy of restitution was manifested in the classroom beliefs she constructed with the children. In these ways Karin was able to live out her desire to build a trusting community in her classroom.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) write that personal practical knowledge is a term they use to enable teachers to be described as knowing and knowledgeable. They say:

> Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with exigencies of a present situation (p. 25).

They found in more recent years (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) that teacher knowledge and identity, a 'story to live by', are interwoven. My experiences with Karin, attending to her with an eye and ear to understanding her 'story to live by', developed in me this deeper understanding of personal practical knowledge. Karin's epistemology, her way of knowing, constructed as her 'personal practical knowledge', was imbued with her own identity, her own 'story to live by'. The intellectual act of constructing experiences for children's learning were always centred around attending to the child in a holistic way first. But Karin also attended to situations in multiple ways. As with the three dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), she attended to her personal inner feelings and knowing, the social experiences of the children, and the curriculum they were making in the classroom. She was conscious of where the children were in their growing development as learners, where they had come from and where they were going. As well, she was aware of the immediate situation, the 'in classroom place' where she engaged in the work.

She honoured the children's own developing 'stories to live by'. The children's experiences were educative (Dewey, 1938) in the sense that the quality of interaction and the quality of continuity in their own experiences lead to growth in their knowing and identity. Jody, for example, who had difficulty with academics, loved art. Creating artwork was her special gift and when her gift became known and acknowledged by Karin, Jody began to shine. I believe Karin gave Jody a gift of grace. Karin permitted Jody to create a place from which to grow. That is, she conceded Jody some time and some space, allowing Jody, as a whole person to emerge. Jody started taking risks and saw herself as a reader and writer as well as painter. Jody was affirmed when she expressed what was in her heart, her own unique contribution, just as Karin was affirmed by expressing her own story in her classroom.

Karin told me how difficult she found addressing so many things at once. She said it was so hard to know how to do this: attending to Jon, who loved to question and reflect on things; attending to Tony who needed lots of guidance in learning ways to participate in a classroom full of many children; attending to such diverse 'stories to live by'. Her commitment to the children, part of her 'story to live by' made her try. Bateson (1994) says, "We need to find ways to encourage the sense of the self as continuing to develop through responsive interaction" (p. 74). I saw the necessity of the responsive community to enable Karin's 'story to live by' to continue. To continue, Karin had to feel safe to express her story. In this way there would be stories created and memories to go back to.

In talking and reflecting with others she would be able to continue to attend to what mattered most. Whether this could happen in her school depended. The 'out of classroom place', in contrast to Karin's 'in classroom place' did not encourage this kind of reflection and response. Yet Jeanette so wished to create such a place.

> *Now I thread my needle with the whites and browns and yellows of flesh tones. I wish to embroider hands alongside hearts. Hands will be used to craft new wonders. Neither heart nor hands can act alone.*

Continuity of Karin's 'Story to Live By': Attending and Improvising

Change is ever present. Something is always happening on the school landscape. Being composed of people, things and events in interaction, this is to be expected (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Yet, through all of the changes, Karin had a sense that what she was doing in her classroom was evolving. She worked the changes in, just as she told the children to do when they made mistakes. No erasers could be used. By improvising she would not erase her 'story to live by', the story evolving out of her past and present experiences. She could attend to both–the situation at hand and who she was. By improvising she showed me how she attended in multiple ways. She kept in mind her own inner knowing and what she believed, evolving from her present and past experiences, as well as her knowing of the children and their circumstances, their own past and present experiences *and* she kept in mind the demands of the situation she was experiencing–the time, place, people, and things present.

Bateson (1994) talks about superficial changes within profound continuity. Karin was committed to her beliefs about honouring the whole child and in the 'in classroom place' she was able to make the kinds of adaptations necessary so that whatever abrupt changes happened she would 'fit them in' with her emerging 'story to live by'. She improvised in order to continue to both attend and honour what she believed for children, part of her 'story to live by' and to address the mandated curriculum situation 'at hand' presented to her. The multiple attending required was a constant challenge to her teacher knowledge. She often told me how helpful it was to have me in her class, to understand what she was trying to do. It helped her reflect. "That's why you're good for me," she said (field note, December 13, 1998).

Improvisation was embodied in Karin's practice. For example, Karin needed to give her children a science test on colours. She adapted the test to reflect the idea of multiple literacy in which she believed. She attended to both the need for children to show her what they knew about colours and the need to embrace different ways for children to demonstrate their knowing. Children painted self portraits but were given only primary colours with which to work. As another example, she talked about the year she was required to teach a new grade level. She spoke of "flying by the seat of your pants" (taped conversation, February 8, 1999). She adapted themed approaches from her previous grade level. These adapted themes embodied her commitment to multiple ways of knowing but she admitted to me that if she had not had the support of her teacher friend she did not know how she would have managed.

Open ended activities were another way she improvised to provide activities in which all children could participate. For example, Karin designed a writing activity around freshly fallen snow in December. Samantha was invited to create a rhyming poem, "Wouldn't it be cool…" (field note, December 11, 1998) but the children were also praised for writing sentences or copying 'winter' words from the board. Everyone could be successful. Karin could attend to both the story in her heart, that is, that all children participate, and to curricular demands to develop children's writing skills.

My presence was also a change for Karin. While joining her classroom as a researcher she brought me into her story. She told me how important it was to have someone to talk to about things in the classroom. This was my contribution I thought. Together we wondered about the 'builders' during choice time and their commitment to continue with their building story. Reflecting together we thought more about the value of play for children. We also talked about the value of looking and talking about something we both could see together. Such shared work was a great way for teachers to learn we thought. I was joining with Karin and she was joining with me. I learned more of her commitment to continuing our conversation in the dialogue journal that we kept. After a number of exchanges she found herself with so little time that she began to paste in articles she collected. In order to keep our conversation going, she improvised a way to join in.

The community around the school was also changing. More improvisation was necessary. Finding parents to come on field trips was more difficult. She said some children came to school without adequate vocabulary, manners and classroom 'skills'. Karin adapted her practices so that those children who did not 'fit' the prescribed curriculum of school had a place in her classroom community. Karin made a place for Ben to enter classroom life through inviting him to 'choice time'. Ben's previous school experiences, his narrative history with school, left him unprepared or perhaps unwilling to join the class through more traditional school activities. Already in Grade one, he had been labeled a failure. But now Ben was on his way. In joining others he began to learn. Building relationships amongst students through play in 'choice time' became a way for Karin to adapt to students' changing circumstances.

Other children in the class showed us how they were adapting to changes too. We puzzled about the way the children incorporated playing cards into the Aztec building story. It happened after Jon's Grandad had been to class to teach card games. At first we thought the 'Aztec' building story would be over, but soon we came to see how the children improvised to keep the story going. The children returned to their play, incorporating cards into their building story. Now cards were castle walls and pathways. The children improvised a way to attend to both their new learning about cards and to the ongoing building story they were authoring together. How different it would have been if the children were not allowed to use the cards in this way–if there were rules about their use. They would have to choose, giving up one thing that mattered to accommodate another. Karin allowed the children to do both.

Both Karin and I were aware we were in an 'in classroom place'. It was relatively safe for Karin to live out her stories of practice. She was not under the constant scrutiny of others so she was safe to improvise to continue her 'story to live by'. Jeanette's arrival as principal had been a breath of fresh air for Karin. She and Jeanette were similarly 'aligned' in their epistemologies, their ways of understanding how children learn. They both believed in seeking out, welcoming and celebrating the differences amongst children. With Jeanette, Karin did feel safer in her 'in classroom place' but the place itself had a narrative history of being relatively safe for Karin. Karin's practice evolved for many years before Jeanette's arrival at the school. She found her teaching work often exhausting and difficult. However, even with intrusions emanating from the 'out of classroom place' about evaluation and testing, for example, she felt relatively safe to structure her practice in ways to accommodate curricular expectations and her own passions, her own story. Karin's 'celebration of learning' evolved into a 'three part open house' over many years, for example. It was the closed classroom door that allowed her to feel safe.

Karin was able to express her 'story to live by' in her classroom for the most part. However, Karin's child-centred philosophy of teaching and learning sometimes rubbed up against notions of teacher directed programming held by some of her classroom parents. Karin's beliefs about the way children learned, her epistemological framework, so embodied her 'own story to live by' that she felt unease in her interaction with parents who held different views of learning. Karin, with tears in her eyes, told me she was "struck to the core" (field note, March 6, 1999) when some parents questioned her programming. Sociopolitical changes promoting increasing roles for parents in the schools brought many parents inside Karin's classroom. Karin welcomed parents but sometimes she felt unnerved. She told me her teaching is a very personal thing, done in a very public way.

Safety was an issue in the 'out of classroom place' for Karin. It was here she experienced discontinuity of her 'story to live by'. The 'out of classroom place' had been, for Karin, for many years a place of competition. She felt she was not safe to play and be herself. In the past, it seemed to Karin that she was valued for carrying out prescribed practices. For example, she continually had to change report cards to suit the latest best version. She was valued for testing children and getting them through achievement tests. Karin had not felt valued for her own ideas. She instead felt valued for executing the ideas of others in her classroom. She was to respond but authorship remained with some one else.

I had known Karin in the classroom for only a few months. She spoke to me about her beliefs in a philosophy of restitution rather than rules to guide behaviour. She said it was so important for children to belong. She told me about her passion for multiple literacy. She had many ideas. She expressed her knowing in her own practices. Through her own authorship she took responsibility. Her knowing was moral. However she felt the ability to express her 'story to live by' stopped at the door. Karin's stories of practice were not widely known in the school.

In Karin's classroom she and the children were safe to improvise, to try out something new without giving up their own stories. In her 'in classroom place' she felt people were able to be themselves. Once again I saw a difference for Karin as she crossed the boundary to the 'out of classroom places'. Changes to the sociopolitical landscape as a whole meant that good times had given way to fiscal restraint, reflected for example, in large classes, broken down intercoms and computers , and few co-operative library programs. For Karin this meant teaching combined grades and rethinking release time programs. Team planning became a way for Karin to respond to these changes bringing her further out into the 'out of classroom place'. However, I saw how working within a team made improvisation more difficult. Her 'story to live by' acknowledged that people's differences were to be honoured and respected but, in team planning situations, she felt a feeling that there was one best way of doing things. It was frustrating for her. She felt less commitment to adapt to this situation because she did not yet feel she belonged, that she could bring her 'story to live by' with her.

As time went on with Jeanette in the school however, she did venture out of her classroom. She learned Jeanette liked to talk about educational matters as she did. She knew Jeanette supported her ideas about restitution. Jeanette and Karin's beliefs about the way children learn were part of their 'stories to live by'. They were both looking in the same epistemological direction. Bolstered by Jeanette's encouragement, Karin tried to gain support for the beliefs of restitution as a school-wide program. Restitution was an educational issue close to her heart but she had difficulties engaging others in conversations around the topic.

Teachers had learned to be defensive with new initiatives in the 'out of classroom place'. She had the sense that although a few teachers believed in restitution, many simply disregarded it. She felt that in the 'out of classroom place', her contribution was limited. Because she did not feel safe, to play with ideas, experiment and improvise, her involvement was limited. There were few stories created, few stories to return to, to think about or tell someone else about. There was little possibility for nurturing a continuing sense of her self. This discontinuity of a 'story to live by' in the 'out of classroom place' was a source of anxiety for Karin. She did not know what to do.

> *I thread my needle with orange then yellow, followed by green and blue, indigo and violet. I wish to embroider a magical rainbow. It highlights for me the life giving quality of a responsive community to continue and transform a 'story to live by'. I notice how the multiple strands of each coloured thread intertwine to make my floss rich and vibrant.*

Creating a Story in the 'In Classroom Place'

It was in her classroom that Karin could make a difference. As Karin's teaching was enlivened by her 'story to live by', stories were created enabling Karin to continue to attend. Karin's classroom sparkled with laughter, fun and anticipation as the children waited excitedly for the arrival of Curious George. We wondered about the continuing blocks story composed over several months at 'choice time'. We felt sadness when Ethan left because Karin was not sure if those in other schools would see Ethan through the learning label he had been assigned. She told me she wanted the children's experiences to be special, so they would remember. Karin would remember too. I experienced Karin's classroom as a place of story. The classroom was not a flat space. It radiated like the rainbow community Jeanette so wished for the whole school. It was a community where the children and Karin were able to contribute in ways that mattered to them most.

The experiences created for Karin a rich store of memories. Miller (1999) suggests that if we can return by way of "nerves on skin", we can grow in wisdom by learning from the stories of our experience. Memories are strong, stories evolve, when my emotions have been touched, when I have been a part. The resulting stories are a resource to call on. Karin reflected on the stories in her journal. She could talk to her teacher friend about them. During my research time in her classroom, she talked to me. In talking to others she awakened to new ways to retell stories with greater possibility (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Storytelling with the trust of response is an educative experience in Dewey's sense (1938).

Karin was able to sustain and continue to attend to what mattered to her most, through journaling or talking to her teacher friend or to me. In this way, she was able to keep her 'story to live by' present so it could continue. She told me that in journaling, for example, she was able to step back. She was not able to control the situation but she was able to control what she did about the situation. I saw her stance as allowing her to continue to author her story. For example, she continually needed to adapt her teaching for the multiple experiences the children brought with them to class. Some children like Jon had many educative experiences to draw on, whereas Ben had lived with few educative experiences so far in his young life. Karin had to continually stretch her imagination to reach them both through the activities she provided. Using reflective journals and conversation in the responsive community with her teacher friend and later myself gave her a stronger sense of why her practice included themed and multiple approaches to curriculum for example. She showed me this strong sense of what she believed when talking to me about using open ended activities in her practice. She said "I can't imagine close ended stuff–it doesn't fit with me–I can't imagine saying everyone has to do this" (taped conversation, February 8, 1999).

Returning by way of story she could also continually transform her own 'story to live by' through reflection and conversation with others. Laying her stories out for view, laying them beside other stories would enable her to notice as Greene says "that while we experience our problems as personal…they are indeed social. It is a move from me to us, from loneliness to society" (in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 43). As the months went by, the conversations Karin and I engaged in expanded outward from the concerns about particular children to concerns about the nature of curriculum and ideas about children's education as a whole. As she thought more and more about the larger educational picture, as she was affirmed by my encouraging response, she awakened to the realization that her voice was worthy of being heard.

> *My strands of thread continue to move in and around the quilt shaping a rainbow. As I do I notice the ease with which my needle enters the material in some places and the resistance of the material in other spots. It is difficult in these places and my fingers hurt.*

A 'Story to Live By': Jeanette

For most people at the school there was a prescribed acceptable identity for a principal. This was the 'role' Jeanette, on coming to this school, was expected to walk into. The role provided a scripted story which met the expectations of those who received it and those who authored it. From the outset she did not want to be pulled into a story made by someone else. She longed to create a rainbow community she held dear in her heart. Her longing was part of her 'story to live by' composed from her past experiences.

I first learned about her story 'off the landscape' of school. In a curriculum class we participated in story groups where we responded to each other's stories. We had the chance to spiral through memories. We listened and we wondered. We were not rushed. I began to learn her story. Jeanette had taken a year to work in graduate studies at the university. While there, she kept telling stories of her last school. Her memories were strong. Her memories kept her 'story to live by' present, sustaining her attention. It was further support to the idea that communal sustenance for identity, in this case, a principal's, "can reside in memory of the past as well as currently among colleagues" (Connelly & Clandinin, p. 100, 1999).

She told me stories of the magic that went on at her last school, amongst the children, staff and herself. To me it seemed to be a place of possibility–a responsive community where the ribbons of telling and retelling stories of school threaded through the 'out of classroom places'–the hallways, offices and staff room of the school. Her stories helped me imagine how a school could move and evolve. Jeanette liked to talk about the interesting way the school began. She had opened the school. It was brand new. In selecting staff, Jeanette said she asked them for their beliefs. They told her how seldom they were ever asked this question in an interview. Eventually the staff she appointed were people who knew her well. They were all friends. Jeanette would often tell me how they grew up together. Arriving at this new school, it was her intention to express the knowing she carried in her heart in this new place. She knew it was complex. There were constant changes.

Like Karin, her knowing and the stories in her heart were inextricably bound together. As with the many women interviewed in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule's (1986) study, she was depicting the intertwining of her "intellectual and ethical development" (p. 18). As Belenky et al. (1986) write of some of the women they interviewed, she grounded her epistemological framework in the metaphors she used. She saw herself as a 'storytelling' principal. Of course for this to continue, she would need to have stories to tell.

She told me that in her last school, it did not matter what they as a staff got themselves into, because they had each other. The relationship was there from the beginning. At her last school Jeanette and the staff were supported by each other as they each attended to their own 'stories to live by'. The close relationships meant that they each felt safe to improvise so they could be part of ongoing changes, bringing their 'stories to live by' with them, just as Karin did in her 'in classroom place'. For Jeanette to continue her 'story to live by' in her new school, she wished to begin here, with the relationship.

Arriving in the Midst of Stories

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) say the landscapes of schools are storied. A principal comes to a school in the midst of these. To participate, a principal may need to create a new story of school together with staff. This is what Jeanette wanted to do. Creating a responsive community in the school would embody her own 'story to live by'. But it is complex because of the myriad of stories and histories involved–of the school, of the people at the school, the children, the community, and of the larger social-political milieu. They all interact to promote or lessen the potential to build a new story of school. A principal, residing for the most part in the 'out of classroom place' at school is most exposed to the tangle of stories.

A story of school:

Jeanette soon learned that the 'out of classroom place' was seen as a formal place by staff. The 'out of classroom place' was a place where rules, policies and procedures were handed down by the principal. Karin's stories of school attested to this. Karin was once told, for example, that her 'bubble room' could only be used for testing purposes, never for personal use. She was told marks must be put on report cards even in the primary grades. Staff expected to be told. Their expectations shaped what Jeanette was able to do. Apart from questions to delineate procedures such as what to do about outdoor boots, there was often silence at staff meetings. Karin said Jeanette had been the fifth principal in seven years. Questions around how long 'the principal' would stay and the principal's 'agenda' directed attention away from Jeanette as a person towards Jeanette as a role.

For her part, Jeanette's experiences as principal at her last school affected her wish for a structure of interdependent, rather than hierarchical relationships in the school. She wanted to reach out to staff based on her experiences. For teachers the idea of moving 'towards' a principal on this school landscape was fraught with peril–based on their experiences. It was a frustrating situation. Many staff wanted rulings, what to do about bathroom passes, what to do about pizza lunches, but Jeanette wanted stories. She believed stories were needed to help her bind the staff, the children and herself to create the rainbow image of school that she remembered in her heart.

An institutional story:

There was another problem. Jeanette's 'story to live by' embodied a different way of knowing than the prevailing epistemology funneled onto the school landscape at the time. There were memos, emails, phone calls and forms to fill out that often rubbed up against what she believed in for children and people in schools. There were expectations from downtown including new reporting procedures, competitive best ways of doing things, and an unrelenting march towards higher and higher achievement. She felt she had been able to make contributions to educational conversations in the past. But now she felt like she was being squeezed out. She wanted to connect with staff and to the people 'downtown' but she did not want to lose part of herself in the process. She did not want her story replaced with a conflicting one.

Of particular concern to Jeanette was the need to rate children's learning. This rating caused dilemmas for Jeanette. She told me how she wanted to honour other staff's knowing, knowing that was philosophically different from her own, yet it caused her a dilemma because she would not allow a "D" on a report card. She could not bring herself to act in this way, because she felt all children needed to feel successful. She said children's experiences in elementary school would be remembered all their lives. She believed these things. The beliefs were part of her knowing, part of her 'story to live by'.

Choosing to live by her story created a sticky situation in the 'here and now' but Jeanette was looking at the 'long term' bigger picture. She was thinking about how the past could affect the future. Like Karin, her attending was multiple. Like Karin she could not give up her story to be replaced by another one. Yet she knew some staff were following procedures they were comfortable with. They were acting in ways philosophically aligned with central administration at the time. She felt sometimes like Karin, that she was a lone voice. However, unlike Karin she could not close her door. Jeanette had to live with the dilemma, exposed–in the out of classroom place.

Stories of continual changes:

Jeanette found building relationships with staff difficult when there were so many changes going on. Even as she began her first year, primary classes had to be reorganized because of 'numbers' in the classrooms. New staff members joined the school. There were changes in assignments for staff. Her arrival at the school was a change for her and a change for staff. There was always something. She told me it was hard to get a sense of this new landscape with all the daily 'rain and sleet and snow' coming down. However she imagined the trusting relationships she had with staff in her last school. She thought continuously about how to she could build these now.

Staff and Jeanette faced continual distractions. Her attention was constantly being diverted to administrivia, and issues emanating from 'downtown'. She was new, she had to keep track of everything. She did not yet know people, the teachers, children, parents.

She did not know traditions, part of the narrative history of the school. To construct a common framework she needed to talk to people to contribute her views and to hear theirs but she could not get a conversation going. Sometimes she could not even make contact with the staff. Often she was not able to even leave her office space.

> *Now I pick up the greys and browns–earthtone colours to depict a return, like going home. I will embroider inukshuks, the human figure that endures through the ages. With the inukshuk I see represented a way to continue to attend to the human being,–doing the best we can in the situation by improvising with whatever is at hand.*

Continuity of Jeanette's 'Story to Live By': Attending and Improvising

Jeanette did not seem widely recognized or understood by many staff at the school. She asked staff to 'be the change' at the professional development day a year and a half after her arrival. She was inviting staff to join with her to author the direction the school would take. It was an invitation to be a part of something. Jeanette's narrative history, part of her 'story to live by', directed her attention to the possibilities for creating community in the 'out of classroom place' of school. Her experiences in her last school showed her how her own and others' identities were able to continue to grow in a responsive community. Jeanette brought her memories forward to her new school. They were the stories she was reminded of by the 'triggers' in her office,–the children's literature, the paintings, photos and mementos, the bears. The stories gave her hope to see beyond the present situation–to keep on trying. Attending to these stories helped her 'story to live by', the story in her heart, to remain present.

She wanted more. She wanted to create new stories to remember. She continually tried to make the 'out of classroom place' a safe place for story. She tried to change the tone of the 'out of classroom place'. She wondered at first about reading children's literature in staff meetings but she began and she continued. When she arrived, the 'out of classroom places' seemed barren. Signs displayed rules for conduct. There were few displays to trigger stories in the hallways, library and office places when she arrived.

Jeanette lived in the 'out of classroom places' at the school. She began to work with what she had.

As months went by, displays of hearts, hands, and teddy bears seeped out to the hallways, library and staff room of the school. By Christmas of her first year, an inukshuk made of kindergarten blocks moved from the sanctuary of her inner office to a place by the outer office door. She was trying to change the sense of these 'out of classroom places', to share with staff her 'story to live by'. She could not yet say what was in her heart. Creating displays was an improvisatory act. For some, her efforts spoke of a new decorating scheme to make the place look 'nicer'. For others there was a response in kind; rainbows and hearts appeared in classrooms, teddy bears sprung up. They were whispers of a new story of school dancing around older stories, firmly entrenched.

Jeanette continually invented and adapted to deal with the situation at hand. As a principal she was known by many staff and principals in the system for her remarkable work in schools. There might be expectations from downtown. She needed to show central administration that something was happening but the changes were slow. She decided to capture complexity in pictures. She created three photo albums, the first showing her 'story to live by' expressed in the out of classroom displays around the school, the second showing her own and staff commitment to smaller class sizes in the primaries and more 'hands on' learning, and a third showing the ongoing structural changes, such as new teachers at the school, new assignments and new classroom spaces.

Jeanette's 'story to live by' embodied a commitment to evaluation as descriptive, as performance and as celebration. Taking photographs to show an as yet thin thread of deep change within ongoing structural changes was an improvisatory act that enabled her 'story to live by' to continue. She could attend to her own story, one of honouring performance assessment as she created a photo album to document and describe the situation at the school. *And* she could attend to her need to show central administration that something was happening at the school. Through improvisation she attended to both.

Jeanette's practice as principal embodied her 'story to live by' but she often only felt safe to express this where no other stories filled the spaces. For example, she used the hallways and the library and her own office spaces to subtly bring her story out. But her voice was only one of many because she did not choose to raise it above the others. Jeanette wanted to work *with* staff, not tell them what to do. This choice made her vulnerable. She often felt alone. She said the conversation amongst staff would often change when she walked by.

In her last school the 'out of classroom' hallways, office, staff room and work places became places alive with wonder and inquiry. I imagine these improvisatory encounters embodied the joint commitment the people had for each other and the children at the school. I sensed this is how much of the story of her last school evolved. She said the conversation she snatched with Karin, the time we talked together in the staff room about portfolios while cutting paper flowers for spring happened all the time in her previous school.

Now she encountered another story. Most staff had learned to be silent at staff meetings, they expected to be told. Jeanette wanted all voices to be heard. She wanted dialogue and conversation to bring staff closer to each other and to her . Building relationships was part of her 'story to live by'. "The reason we are here in the broader scheme of things is to help people listen and attend with their heart" (field note, January 23, 1998). She improvised ways to enact this, given the situation. For example, she welcomed staff to her office to help her figure things out. The door was never closed. She extended an invitation. The teddy bears, the informality, at first to appeal to children, made this 'out of classroom place' seem safer for staff too. She used this place to 'play' with changes the school had to deal with, to use imagination and further improvise.

For example, it was here she talked to me about devising a plan in response to the tight fiscal agenda for the next school year. She wanted to inquire about the real cost of educating a child in the district. She was not sure where this might lead but the tight fiscal situation could give her the opportunity with staff, to set an inquiry framework within which together they could think about what was most important for children. School changes which could be oriented to the needs of children would be a way of adapting to the financial cutbacks in a way to keep her own story and the teachers' voices present in the situation.

Jeanette also showed me how she improvised a release time plan with staff. In her 'safe' office place most of the 'playing' took place. On the one hand, Jeanette was trying to respond to fewer dollars in the school in the upcoming year. This was the situation. On the other, she saw that 'playing' with release time offered an opportunity to think and do things differently. Children in combined groupings could meet with other teachers in the school for interactive activities. Groups of teachers could have their preparation times together. For Jeanette, the possibilities for building community in the 'out of classroom places' would be enhanced. It was a way to embody what she believed in. Some teachers were happy to be invited to her office. The plan moved and took on various shapes as the teachers gave their input. But not everyone wanted to come. For those who still saw Jeanette as scripted 'principal role', she would have to figure out how to deal with the deficit on her own. It was her job.

Although Jeanette tried to transform her 'out of classroom' office place to one more similar to a safe 'in classroom place', the change was not perceived this way by all. Jeanette and some staff people wanted to adapt but many still could not. From the beginning she reached out to staff with special notes, little treasures, smiles and always hugs of welcome. For teachers it was an invitation to play school, just as in Karin's room. But there was a difference. The young children in Karin's class seemed to know little of a narratively constructed script of school.

Karin was accepted for herself, a person. There seemed little notion of what a teacher's 'role' might be. There seemed few fixed expectations. Karin told one child she became a teacher so she could play. Jeanette lived in a different situation. Most teachers had lived a story of principal as 'role' in the 'out of classroom place' of school. Various versions of a theory-driven practice story seemed to be 'in place'. Theory driven practice was the expected story of school. Procedures and prescriptions were expected to be 'handed down'. For many teachers there seemed to be no narrative history of inquiry or wonder in the school. There seemed to be no tradition of playing with ideas. Jeanette as principal was difficult for many to recognize. For many, Jeanette seemed not to fit the role.

Changing the sense of the 'out of classroom place' and the story of school in place, it's narrative history, was agonizingly slow for Jeanette. Even after two years she talked only of 'pockets' of community created in the school. Growing towards community was halting, a few steps forward and then a few steps back. Jeanette's 'story to live by' expressed in her attempts to create community in the school were often interpreted another way. Other stories still dominated. Release time plans were viewed by some as efforts to reduce costs only. Displays of hearts and hands and rainbows were taken by some to be an attempt at making the school look more attractive and reduce vandalism. The school art auction was developed as a fund raiser. All these were true but the story was bigger. Jeanette was attending to more.

> *Now I pick up a single strand of blue. The colour pales. It is thin and wan. I wish to continue my embroidery but my thread is weak. It keeps breaking. It may take a long time to finish.*

Pockets of Story in the 'Out of Classroom' Place

Jeanette was in a tight spot, wedged from above and wedged from below. Just as teachers were to follow her, she was to follow those deemed up the ladder. Karin was more sheltered in her classroom from institutional stories that did not make sense to her.

She could close her door. Jeanette as principal could not. I was reminded of the line in Winnie-The-Pooh when Pooh was stuck in Rabbit's doorway. He asked Christopher Robin, "Then would you read a sustaining book such as would help comfort a wedged bear in great tightness?" (Milne, 1926, p. 30). Like Pooh Bear, Jeanette needed support, a sustaining story. She gathered around her those people that knew of her–that knew her story. Many were off the landscape of school. I played my part. People need to be valued she said.

Jeanette had me to talk to. I listened to the story in her heart, her 'story to live by'. The significant events from her past, the experiences she had at her last school, directed her attention and intentions for the future. They led to her desires to build a community in the school. We talked about the inukshuk, the idea of a marker, an image to move towards. But in the end, the inukshuk model she created moved no further than the outer office door. With me she could talk about what she desired. It was difficult to express these ideas in her practice in 'the out of classroom place'. Dewey (1934) believed that without external embodiment an experience remains incomplete. Except for the small pockets of community she eventually could see forming in the school, Jeanette's 'story to live by' was not able to be fully realized. It continued only fleetingly, here and there in the place she lived in, the 'out of classroom place' of school.

As I continued to stay close to Jeanette, I came to see she was not, as I first feared, losing her 'story to live by'. I realized she could not express her 'story to live by' in the way she would have liked because she did not feel she belonged. She did not feel attached. "Some days I have no memory of what I needed to do when I came in…There's no attachment to this place, as a place, as a sacred place" (transcribed conversation, December 12, 1997). She did not feel confident in the presence of a trusting community, to give her response. There were a few teachers she said. She felt there were pockets of community in the school. She worked with what she had; improvising as much as she was able. But often Jeanette felt alone.

Jeanette and Karin remembered what they were a part of. Karin created stories in her classroom. Jeanette brought stories with her to the school. The stories created from these memories formed part of their narrative history and contributed to what mattered most to them . They contributed to their 'story to live by. As Coles (1989) says, "Who I'll be tomorrow is the story I will learn to tell." The 'out of classroom places' on the school landscape were not places that Karin or Jeanette felt a part of. In the 'out of classroom places' there was little of a new story of school to tell. Jeanette like Karin and her pursuit of university studies, would continue her 'story to live by', zig zag fashion, 'off the landscape' of school.

> *I am reminded that as I slip my needle through the quilt I move through layers. My stitches move through thick and thin. The embroidery work to hold the quilt together is not that easy. However I am joined by others round the frame. We laugh and share a story or two. My inukshuks are coming.*

A Place of Story Off the School Landscape

I think of our three way meeting off the school landscape to share the stories and construct the 'crazy quilt' as a place where we were present to each other. The complexities of the storied school landscape were back grounded and a story I will never forget was created in this 'off landscape' place. The contrast between this place and the 'out of classroom place' at school sharpened my own understanding of continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal and teacher at a time of principal transition to a school.

Attending to each other:

The idea of eventually sharing the stories from each of a principal's and teacher's perspective was put forth at the beginning. I recall how all my potential teacher participants responded favourably to this idea. I chose Karin because she taught young children and I would feel most comfortable with her, given my experiences. Karin did not know me but, because she attended to Jeanette as a person first, she discovered that Jeanette's ways of thinking about children and learning were similar to her own. Karin found that her epistemological framework was similar to Jeanette's. Karin also knew Jeanette trusted me. I am struck by how similar this circumstance of mutual friendship and epistemological alignment was to the situation in Jeanette's former school where she said all staff knew her or knew someone who knew her.

Sharing stories brought everyone, Jeanette, Karin and I, closer together. For me it was a way to feel what they were going through as I tried, in the stories, to attend to what mattered most for Jeanette and Karin. I believe as Noddings and Witherell say:

> stories attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. The story fabric offers us images, myths, and metaphors that are morally resonant and contribute both to our knowing and our being known (1991, p. 1).

Improvisation:

The 'off landscape place' of my home was a welcoming place. There were no stories, no narrative histories to bar the way. We were free to make up the paths our lives would take as we lived our lives. We were free to use our imaginations. The informal trusting relationships created in my work with Karin and Jeanette, meant we would feel comfortable playing with ideas for our three way meeting. From the beginning we agreed the time was for sharing responses to the stories. The details had not been worked out. In conceptualizing our meeting I began to imagine the way quilters gather together around a frame to contribute their pieces, odds and ends. I spoke with Karin and Jeanette about sharing their story pieces in a similar way. Decisions such as meeting in the comfort of my home, the plan to construct a quilt with real scraps of fabric to retell the story, and a decision to read the picture book, The Quilter's Gift (Brumbeau, 2000) evolved from using our imaginations in commitment to each other. The sense of belonging enabled us to feel safe to contribute in authentic ways. We spoke from our hearts.

We were committed but I was not sure exactly what would happen. We created a place of grace where risks can be taken and mistakes forgiven. I did not want to be 'in control'. I trusted them. Like the making of an inukshuk , we used what was at hand. There were the stories. There were bits of fabric, pins and scissors. There was a children's storybook. And there was each other. It occurs to me now that the whole process was an improvisation. We were inventing together. It was join, not follow. Like quilters around the frame we were working in sight of each other. The quality of our interaction was participatory so, as with the making of a crazy quilt, one thing lead to another. Karin and Jeanette shared their thoughts about each other's stories. I called this "A poem in two voices". They retold their experiences of trying to build community in the school. I created "Inching towards community" from this conversation. As we moved to the 'quilting activity', Jeanette and Karin picked up their fabric pieces and I, in order to join in, took up the pins.

Jeanette started cutting shaped pieces. I had no idea she was going to do this. Karin, in response, started shaping pieces of her own, to compliment. For example, Karin cut out some fabric sticks to denote the Aztec building stories. I laid them near the fabric 'log house' cut to represent her grandmother, the pioneer. She, in turn, picked up a piece of corduroy to fashion a bumpy road. She was referring to the making of community in the 'out of classroom place' of school. I placed it by the log house. Jeanette took a piece of old tartan worn at the edges to denote the fraying of an old story of school. She folded the fabric over to denote a new story being slowly made. In all of this there was a sense of enterprise and we talked about the word. I tried to capture this experience in "Pinned pieces".

Continuity of a 'Story to Live By': A Story to Grow On

We felt safe enough to show our own uniqueness, our differences. In so doing, each of us was given the opportunity to see and learn more. Our responses, given in sight of each other, would help each of us grow. Our 'stories to live by' would continue to evolve. For example, in part of a conversation I name "Teacher Talk" after the quilt activity, Karin said she was not sure about moving towards portfolio assessment. She was still trying to sort assessment out. She wondered about teachers choosing items. Jeanette was safe to talk about her belief that children need the opportunities for 'retelling' what they learned. She thought perhaps teachers should choose some items and children should choose others. I thought about the memories that triggered stories to affirm the children's knowing of themselves. As we talked, our ideas intermingled and we were awakening to see that the different views among us would enlarge the picture. Participating in our responsive community was encouraging our knowing to become deeper and broader.

I was gaining insight as I noted many of Karin's pieces, the snowman, building sticks, and rainbow fabric, which told of the 'in classroom place' where she belonged and expressed her 'story to live by' in her practice. Karin's pieces represented significant parts of her past as well. What struck me about Jeanette's pieces were how few pieces evolved from her experiences in the school now. There were pieces from her past and evolving from the story in her heart like Karin's but it seemed to be another way for me to see that a feeling of belonging is essential in being able to 'express a story to live by' in a place.

As I thought about belonging, I am drawn to the frame of children we made of fabric for a border around the edges of our 'crazy quilt'. As Karin looked down upon all the faces, she talked whimsically and lovingly about children in her classroom through the years. Jeanette looked down upon the faces and spoke passionately about the need for all the teachers in the school to have a common frame. As for me, I thought about the way the three of us were bound together in our inquiry relationship. Jeanette, Karin and I were all attending from a similar window.

The responsive community that was our research relationship created a place, a belonging place for our own longings. As a researcher, our three way get together gave me a deeper appreciation of the situation I was studying. Appreciation recognizes and accepts. It is not assimilation. Differences are acknowledged. In bringing stories together something new may be created. There is the possibility they will evolve. One story does not replace another with a more dominant one. The responsive community provides a nest so that one idea can live beside another. A story can continue to evolve, as our own identity continues to 'become'. This is the continuity of experience, born of the responsive community that Dewey talked about, whereby educational experience is deemed worthwhile. "Movement" in the words of Emily Carr "is the essence of being. When a thing stands still and says 'finished', then it dies" (p. 117). This is the treasure that is the responsive community, the treasure that is not found but made.

CHAPTER 10: HANDING ON

My 'crazy quilt' dissertation is the art-i-fact I hand on to tell of my narrative inquiry journey. Patchwork quilt making is not a specialized form of art but rather it is art form available to all–like telling a story. My 'crazy quilt,' created from story pieces, is a human endeavor. There is a haphazard 'crazy' look to my quilt because I have composed it by attending to people's lives. My own knowing, my own 'story to live by,' is expressed in the construction. While my quilt is constructed thoughtfully and with care, it is not supposed to be perfect. Perfection implies the work is finished. I offer my quilt as a contribution to an ongoing conversation about narrative inquiry, teacher knowledge and identity, complexity and school reform, and re-imagining schools. It is also about composing myself because my story continues. The work of creating ourselves is never done.

In the four sections that follow I reflect on the knowing I have pieced together from my quilt. In section one, the first two pieces are about narrative inquiry–'attending with my life' and 'walking with.' The next two pieces in section two are about teacher knowledge and identity, 'teachers as knowers' and 'expanding an epistemology.' Section three has two pieces, told with an eye to school reform efforts. They are 'joining the conversation' and 'appreciating complexity.' The subheadings are, 'living with narrative histories, 'living with multiple epistemologies,' and 'living with continual changes.' The last piece, section four, follows the ideas of section three and is about re-imagining schools. The two pieces in this section are a 'work in progress' and a 'gift of grace.'

Section One

Narrative Inquiry: Attending With My Life

I tried to come to grips with continuity of a 'story to live by' for a teacher and principal during a time of principal transition in a school. I attended to the lives of two people. There is nothing simple about attending to people. I saw Jeanette and Karin in the midst of complex situations, trying to do the best they could in each circumstance. I attended to "real people in real situations struggling with real problems" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 280). I learned something of Jeanette and Karin's 'stories to live by.' I attended to what was significant for them in their pasts, what they valued in their presents, and what their intentions were for their futures. As well, by attending narratively to history, social changes, and the school landscape itself–the people, things and places on it–I became aware of how Jeanette and Karin attempted to continue their 'stories to live by' in the school. Writing narratives of experience allowed me to reveal this complexity.

Narrative inquiry provided me the opportunity to draw close to people, to myself and to the situation. In drawing close, I saw the complexity in every moment. There were many things to attend to because experience has multiple qualities (Dewey, 1938). In a school, matters of situation, narrative history, epistemology, and the ever changing school landscape all come into play within the three dimensional inquiry space described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). I was mindful of the personal and social dimension (interaction), past, present and future (continuity), and the notion of place (situation). The three dimensional inquiry space made room for my imagination and the relationships with those I worked with. I traveled in many directions.

Attending to people meant more complexity was visible, but, at the same time, there was more commitment to respond. I began to "see things big" (p. 10) as Greene (1995) would say. Greene offers a vision of seeing schooling big or seeing it small. She says that the "vision that sees things small looks at schooling through the lenses of a system–a vantage point of power or existing ideologies–taking a primarily technical point of view" (1995, p. 11). She is concerned that this view screens out life and that we see instead people's lives reduced to pieces in a chess game. On the other hand, she believes that 'seeing big' brings us into contact with people's lives.

I join Greene affirming that by attending to people's storied lives I saw a fuller picture of what was going on. I saw but I also listened. I had to be close to listen. As I listened, I began to feel more. I recall how far away I felt from Jeanette, when I was in Karen's classroom, when I could not hear Jeanette's voice. I will share some scenarios from my work. I will write these as they might seem 'at first glance,' from a distance, as they might be seen small.

Scenario #1:

A principal invites teachers at a staff meeting to talk about their classroom practices. No one speaks.

Scenario#2:

A teacher encourages children to play during a scheduled time each day. This time is gradually extended.

Scenario#3:

School walls, hallways, offices, and a staff room are painted bright colours and covered with hearts and rainbows and teddy bears. Visitors comment on how nice the school looks.

These events, taken from my stories but viewed from a distance, seen small, can be interpreted in many ways because there is no grounding. There is no knowledge of the past, present or future upon events. There is no understanding of how positioning on the school landscape or narrative histories might affect the event displayed. There is no sense given of the person's inner values or the outer situation. There is no passion to engage us because we do not know the stories of the people, places and things involved.

Walking into the school two years after Jeanette's arrival, we may see a school transformed, as Jeanette wished: the rainbows arching over brightly painted walls, combined class groupings, teams of teachers planning, an inukshuk made of blocks and dolls, children's literature and journals in the outer office space. We might walk into a staff meeting and see a principal doing most of the talking, while staff seem to have nothing to say. We might see Karin's classroom as a place where children simply play all day. We would see all these scenes at a distance. We see but we do not know. To see big, we must get closer. To see big, we add our ears and heart. We listen and feel. We attend with our lives.

I do not want to be indifferent. But I am not moved when I read my three scenarios. I am in fact re-moved. I am detached. When I have no story, I miss an opportunity to respond. As I listen I get closer. Narrative inquiry allows me to move towards people and situations different from my own. The story stirs in me commitment to those with whom I work.

How might commitment to people be embodied in educational research? Seeing small means seeing from a detached viewpoint. In seeing big, I attend to more. In telling a story, I am compelled to respond. In becoming more responsive, I believe I learn to be more ethical. I remember that I am in teaching, learning and researching to improve the human condition.

Narrative Inquiry: Walking With

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) write about working with teachers in collaborative ways to tell and live a mutually constructed account of teachers as curriculum makers. They say a future course, a future curriculum for narrative inquirers, would involve two aspects: "to listen to teachers' stories of their work and to construct together stories of teachers as curriculum makers" (p. 392). Thinking of teacher as a metaphor for describing a relationship between people, rather than a role within a system, enables me to view a principal as a teacher also.

Narrative inquiry allowed me the opportunity to 'walk with' my co-researchers. I was with them for an extended period of time, two and a half years with Jeanette and one and a half years with Karin. Initially I was in the research as an inquirer but as time went on and I learned more of their stories I saw myself as a supporter. Attending to Jeanette and Karin's lives, listening responsively in conversation, I could not be otherwise.

In 'walking with,' a time and space to hear the silent stories, stories which are difficult to tell, is created. Silence is not awkward when I walk with a friend. Silence, as well as conversation, can be honoured when we walk together. I wonder about the power of narrative inquiry for working with people whose stories might be difficult to tell. I wonder if the distance, the 'round about-ness' of a story might create a safer place. Sewell (1997) uses stories as bridges to reach to youth in difficulty, youth who have lost their way. I note again the words of Witherell and Noddings who say "Telling and listening to stories can be a powerful sign of regard–of caring–for one another" (1991, p. 280).

My stories show how a principal may need support to tell and live a mutually constructed account of teachers and a principal together making curriculum. The traditional role of principal to "serve their institutions and their society as monitors for continuity" (Wolcott, 1973, p. 320) leaves little room for continuity of a principal's own 'story to live by.' Jeanette own words described the way her vision was becoming "see through–less sustaining" (transcribed conversation, November 6,1998). Wolcott suggests it is curious that, although the role of principal makes great demands in terms of personal commitment, "[the role] seems to limit the options for displaying that commitment once made"(p. 325). The implication in light of my inquiry is the difficulty a principal may face in expressing and then continuing to author a 'story to live by' in a school. I wonder if 'walking with' someone, as in a narrative inquiry, might help keep present a belonging place when there seems to be none. In my inquiry, Jeanette seemed so alone. She often let me know in notes and cards how I was helping her "take the steps everyday, day in and day out" (personal correspondence, January, 2000).

For me, as a narrative inquirer, attending to the inquiry and attending to the people's lives involved, revealed a more expansive purpose to my research. Creating a safe place, albeit small, through listening and response, may be a way to 'walk with' those whose 'story to live by' is not able to be fully expressed in a place.

Section 2

Teacher Knowledge and Identity: Teachers As Knowers

Clandinin and Connelly (1988) describe the knowing of teachers to be personal and practical, derived from "the person's past experience, the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions" (p. 24). They say the epistemology of personal practical knowledge is found not only in the mind but in the body–in action and practices. My stories portray the personal practical knowledge of two educators, a teacher and a principal, separated by position and place on the school landscape.

The notion of a practical epistemology, according to Soltis (1994), legitimizes teacher knowing as having a long history in the academy. Soltis re-presents the ideas of Dewey. For Dewey, ordinary experience is the basis of all knowing and this idea evolves from a "view of the human mind as a very useful adaptive biological/psychological mechanism for the survival of the species" (1994, p. 250). Following Dewey, Soltis speaks of an epistemology of pragmatism–the thought in action practice of a teacher. Dewey's theory, echoed by Soltis, is similar to Carr's (1986) in suggesting purpose and consequence underpin action. Jeanette and Karin were both experienced educators. They both embodied a wealth of personal practical knowledge that they used to adapt to different circumstances. My inquiry affirms the ideas of these authors. However, I believe there is more implied.

Teacher Knowledge and Identity:
Expanding the Epistemology of Personal Practical Knowledge:

Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) suggest that everyone uses theory to make sense of the world. In their minds, theory is not restricted to carefully organized and articulated systems of thought such as 'Marxist theory.' The etymological root of the word theory is 'to view.' Following the work of Belenky et al. (1986), they say

> Our lives are guided by the countless concepts and assumptions, the theories-of-the world, that we have developed, whether consciously or unconsciously throughout our years. As part of our personal theory-making, we have also developed a mesh of beliefs and stances about important issues (1995, p. 226)

My narrative inquiry shows that Jeanette's and Karin's epistemologies, or how they know, is intimately related to their own identities, or who they are in the world. Their beliefs about constructing a world, about learning through holistic and relational ways that engage imagination, are part of their 'story to live by' expressed in the ways they act in the world. The ways Jeanette and Karin acted in the world depended on what they found significant from their pasts, what they attended to in the present, and what they intended to do in the future. Jeanette, for example, expressed her story of a rainbow school community in her practice. She improvised ways, using displays in 'out of classroom places,' to make staff feel her presence, feel her values, when she recognized, that she could not begin a conversation in staff meetings. Karin expressed her story of a classroom community where everyone belonged in her practice by improvising ways, using open ended classroom activities to accommodate differing circumstances for her children in order to ensure all children felt they belonged.

The philosopher Carr (1986) writes that we struggle for coherence between what we believe and what happens. He says that the unity of self is an achievement. "None of us succeeds totally. We keep at it. What we are doing is telling and retelling to ourselves and to others, the story of what we are about and what we are" (p. 97). Carr believes that what is involved in acting according to our values is practical imagination.

He suggests that it is the practical character of imagination that allows events experienced to be *arranged* to create coherence, a story, and a self. Mere sequencing would not tie events together. Coherence as a self, personal identity, is at risk when imagination cannot shape the living and the telling of our experiences. Carr believes it is practical imagination that allows us as human beings to live in time. Typically, the future or present situation we are facing does not correspond to our desires. He suggests that we struggle, using practical imagination to create coherence, in the face of fragmentary experiences. He says practical imagination is "a matter of coping with reality" (p. 91).

I join this conversation and propose insight. Imagination is the unique human tool that allows us to attend in multiple ways within the three dimensional inquiry space. Memories are called up, we attend particularly, we image the future. Imagination lets us travel back and forth. We attend to what matters most to us, our 'story to live by,' and we attend to the practicalities of changing circumstances. We travel in and out. For me, I see an epistemology of practical imagination accounting for our ability to attend in multiple ways. I see practical imagination as what is involved when we improvise a way of being in the world.

When we can improvise, we can continue to author our 'story to live by.' For me authoring is a moral act because it means taking responsibility, being responsive as Buber (1947) would say. The found poetry I named 'Pinned Pieces' accompanying the story cloth at our three-way get-together shines with Jeanette's and Karin's embodied knowing, their 'stories to live by.' Jeanette and Karin were authoring a 'story to live by' making imagination moral.

Both Jeanette and Karin found incoherence, fragmentation and discontinuity in the 'out of classroom place' on the school landscape, because it was in those places they were most unable to use their imagination to improvise, to cope with reality in such a way as to retain authorship of their 'stories to live by.' It makes sense that people in a school might choose to live by a philosophy of practical imagination. The narrative landscape of schools with its continuous interaction of people, places and things (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) makes flexibility and creativity of approach a likely way to adapt to ever changing situations. Imagination is called for. I see an epistemology of personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), the teacher's way of knowing, alive with the teacher's imagination. For me, each person's imagination brings a unique gift to the world. A 'story to live by' and personal practical knowledge are the intermingling of being and knowing. I imagine teachers' personal practical knowledge as an embodiment of a 'story to live by' making the knowledge richer and more vibrant.

I imagine improvisation as the way Jeanette and Karin were able to express their knowing and their being. When I was a child, I played. As I moved from place to place, I played different games with my sister. It was a way to bring my inner world and outer worlds together. I attended to both worlds. Improvisation, like play, is an act of the imagination. While I tend to link the word improvisation to adults and the word play to children, my narrative inquiry makes me wonder if they are the same thing. Jeanette and Karin attended in multiple ways, to continue to author their own 'stories to live by.' Through this imaginative act, they were able to cope with the situations at hand, a practical response, while still attending to the story in their hearts, their 'stories to live by.' Through my research, it becomes clear that teaching is an ethical act when a 'story to live by' is expressed.

Section Three

Wonders About School Reform: Joining the Conversation

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) paint a bleak picture of the historic way teachers have been viewed in connection with curriculum constructed and lived within schools. The word teacher is rarely mentioned in association with reform agendas to improve education, except perhaps as accounting for failures between intended and actual outcomes of curriculum reform. Instead the conduit metaphor is evoked as teachers are asked to drive someone else's (policy makers, school board officials, university researchers, and others') agenda. Teachers have not been regarded as knowers themselves, because the knowing which counted in policy and reform efforts did not include knowledge deemed to be uncertain or practical. Under this scenario, a teacher and a principal in a school should "comply and serve" (Greene, 1995, p. 9). In living my life in schools where I see big, I see this as a loss for the children, other people in the school and education as a whole. It is a crazy situation.

My stories show me that not only a teacher, but a principal too, can be without voice in the 'out of classroom place' of school. Both a teacher and a principal can feel they do not belong. Both can feel unsafe to express what they believe, their 'stories to live by,' in this place. I imagine the difficulty of living with the frustration of being awake and living in silence at the same time.

When Karin and Jeanette are not able to express their 'story to live by' in the 'out of classroom place,' there is the tendency to go elsewhere to continue to find places for, as Carr (1986) writes, we strive to keep our story alive. Wolcott (1973) wrote many years ago that the principal he worked with found other outlets for involvement: church activities, family, gardening and travel, for example. Wolcott noted that even though the principal seemed to deserve a rest and a change, the principal emphasized the "intrinsic satisfaction" (p. 326) of these outside pursuits as being the primary factor for his taking part in these activities. At the school, Karin retreats to the relative safety of her classroom, while Jeanette retreats to her cozy office space. Both Jeanette and Karin's commitment to education is seen in their graduate studies at the university, off the school landscape. Our three-way get-together described in Chapter 8 was revealed as a place where Jeanette and Karin felt safe to express their stories to live by. They constructed a story cloth quilt, a work of improvisation. Poignantly, the meeting took place off the school landscape.

When Jeanette and Karin are limited in their ability to find school places to express their 'stories to live by,' when dialogue is limited in the 'out of classroom place,' does school become a less human place? Jeanette and Karin are relegated to roles to play, not stories to live out, in the 'out of classroom place.' The roles are fixed. They do not move or evolve like a 'story to live by' does. But if the people in schools, doing the educating, are not able to participate with their 'stories to live by' in the 'out of classroom places,' where most of the policies and theories arrive, any changes are on the surface only, there is little commitment.

Wonders About School Reform: Appreciating Complexity

Jeanette's and Karin's stories reveal the complexities to be considered when inquiring into continuity of 'a story to live by' for a teacher and a principal in a school at a time of principal transition. My stories show the school landscape is a complex, dynamic, interactive jumble of stories. The narrative histories of persons, places, things and ideas come into play. Personal and social situations pointing to differing epistemologies amongst peoples are also present and they affect the building of a responsive school community. The continually changing landscape, with people, places and things coming and going, adds more variables and seems to keep everything a bit off kilter. Large and small social and political changes, regardless of the direction that a school might take, play a part. The line from the John Lennon (1980) song, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans," comes to mind. Temporality makes it difficult to tell the lived stories. Putting facts into categories will not do when one thing seems to lead to another. I attempted to do what Geertz recommends, "The essential task is to tell it like it is" (1995, p. 19).

Living with narrative histories:

According to Carr, the past is always with us and it figures into all our knowing in the present situation. He writes:

> To say that we are "historical beings" and "intertwined with history" is not merely to say that we are all *in* history as part of the historical process. It means that we are *in* history as we are in the world: it serves as the horizon and background of our everyday experience. (1986, p. 4)

Our past experiences are part of our very being. Crites (1971) believes there would be a loss of identity if we choose not to incorporate the past. We do not just dismiss our past experiences and throw them all away when something or someone new shows up.

My narrative inquiry provides a deeper understanding of the power of history to shape the landscape of a school. Jeanette, as principal, was new to the school. She was not willing to throw her story away and be subsumed by the story already in place in the 'out of classroom places' at the school. By the same token, many teachers in the school would also not cast aside the narrative history they lived in the 'out of classroom places' for many years.

Jeanette's narrative history, part of her 'story to live by,' committed her to redirect attention in the 'out of classroom place,' away from things, policies and rules, and towards children and people. Memories of her previous school were the images to which she attended. Her intention was not to impose. Jeanette hoped staff at the school would join with her to author a story of school together. She intended that the displays would become messages to reach out to the people at the school, to bring them closer together. She attempted to make the 'out of classroom place' feel safe. She tried many other things: school wide activities involving teams of teachers, divisional team planning, reading children's literature at staff meetings, promoting interactive activities in the library to name a few.

Jeanette hoped theories, policies and procedures funneled onto the school landscape could then be scrutinized and adapted with an eye to children's and one anothers' lives. She intended decisions would be jointly made. The teachers, as well as Jeanette, would participate in the story of school created, because they would be able to express their own 'stories to live by' in this 'out of classroom place'. She hoped the power of relationships would inspire commitment to be part of the story.

She intended the responsive community created would be a place of growth where a broader and deeper noticing would be nurtured as people felt safe to express their own 'stories to live by' and, by so doing , invigorate their own and other's commitment. A principal and staff would not work in a hierarchical arrangement. This was Jeanette's experience in her last school. Now this narrative history, part of her personal practical knowledge, led to her desire to express this knowing, in this new school. She wanted to act on her knowing, to express her 'story to live by.'

But it did not work, not really. It makes sense for people to have an opportunity to express the stories in their hearts in both the in and out of classroom places on a school landscape. Jeanette wanted to build the kind of responsive community in the 'out of classroom places' of the school that would allow her own and other teachers' 'stories to live by' to be expressed. However, I learned from the stories of experience in this inquiry that creating this story is more complex than simply 'opening the doors' to welcome teachers to the 'out of classroom' places.

'Out of classroom places' on a school landscape at a school also have narrative histories. At Jeanette's and Karin's school the 'out of classroom places' had been filled with policies around special needs funding, procedures for reporting achievement, and for ordering textbooks. It is easy to imagine teachers redirecting attention away from the children in their classroom towards things in the 'out of classroom places.'

For Karin, the 'out of classroom place' was not a safe place to tell her stories. As a person, she was not easily recognized by others in this place. Only her teacher friend knew her well. They shared stories of practice and created plans together but they did this in their classrooms. Karin, after many years at the school, had learned to be silent in the 'out of classroom place.'

Narrative history, of people in the 'out of classroom places,' influenced every situation. Jeanette was profoundly influenced by her experience of a responsive community in the 'out of classroom places' of her last school. The remembered image led to her efforts to create a community place in the 'out of classroom places' of the new school. Karin, on the other hand, was profoundly influenced by *her* experiences of performance and competition in the school's 'out of classroom place.' She told me with so many principals and so many changes, there was never the chance to let down her guard. She did not feel safe to make mistakes. Karin and some staff simply started to close their doors. Even though Jeanette invited conversation in staff meetings when she arrived, for example, it took a long time for Karin to feel safe to speak publicly about what she felt in her heart. The narrative history of the 'out of classroom place' on the school landscape had a silencing effect on Karin in places like staff meetings. With Jeanette alone, in a small group, or in her own classroom she felt safe to speak her mind . However, even after two and a half years with Jeanette as principal, Jeanette and Karin could only admit to a few 'pockets of community' in the 'out of classroom places' of the school.

Living with continual changes:

Social/political changes over two and a half years also contributed to the complexity of the school landscape. The educational system of which Jeanette and Karin were part seemed to be influenced and changed in this new climate. A business agenda, an aura of competition in the social/political arena, seemed to be reflected in the school system. Prescribed outcomes were the order of the day. It was, as Karin said to me, as if "they don't seem to trust us" (field note, January 21, 1999). Curriculum became more narrowly defined. Expected results of testing were delineated. There was no room for improvisation to widen the picture. People's 'stories to live by' would have to be shut out in order to control the outcome, to make the system more uniform, efficient, and predictable.

Because the sociopolitical climate changed, Jeanette seemed unrecognizable to some staff, parents and people in the system with her notions of participation and contribution by every individual. She wondered often why she was trying so hard. Her attempts at community building were taking a lot out of her and she often felt alone. She often felt 'out of synch' with her own school system which seemed strongly influenced by the new social/political climate. For Karin, the new emphasis on a more active role for parents in schools caused her concern when she felt some parents did not understand her practice in the classroom. She felt the primary team of teachers she was part of wanted to be seen as doing the same thing in order to accommodate the parents and others.

As well as broad changes permeating the school landscape, there were the continual 'latest awful things' that constantly provoked changes at the school. Jeanette noted many changes teachers were dealing with: room changes, grade level changes, changes in mandated curriculum, changes to numbers of children in a classroom and so on. She began to take photos to capture some of the ongoing structural changes. Teachers and children arrived and left, people got sick, edicts were issued, things happened. The picture was constantly changing. The continual interruptions threatened to fragment the image of a rainbow community Jeanette desired in the 'out of classroom place.' With so much happening, Jeanette talked of becoming distracted. It was hard for her to know if she was making any difference. My study illuminated the complexity of doing anything in a continually changing landscape.

Living with multiple epistemologies:

Further complicating Jeanette's experience in creating a responsive community in the 'out of classroom places' were differences in epistemology amongst people at the school and between Jeanette and others in the wider system. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) describe the best known epistemological dilemma as being the one of theory-driven practice versus practice-driven theory. Typically, notions of theory-driven practice are so pervasive in the 'out of classroom places' of school landscapes that they say it has the quality of a 'sacred story,' something taken for granted and not questioned in the educational world.

The study provides appreciation of the difficulty in dislodging this pervasive story. Epistemologies, too, have histories. Jeanette wanted teachers to think about and inquire into their practices. She believed they could develop their own epistemologies of practice. But Jeanette found that many teachers seemed to want to be told, to be given the prescribed theory to apply. Many of the teachers, it seemed, believed that practice followed theory and this hierarchical arrangement meant that they, as practitioners, were not a part of theory building. In the 'out of classroom places,' many teachers did not join Jeanette in conversation.

Jeanette talked to me about the difficulty of getting conversations going with parents who had different views. Her aim was not to replace one epistemology with another. She wanted to join a conversation. But people turned away. Jeanette must have seemed like a curiosity to some. It was so difficult for Jeanette to improvise and create something new together with others of differing epistemologies when some people would not come together, when some would not listen or talk with her.

I am reminded of the research relationship between Karin, Jeanette and myself. It was a voluntary association amongst the three of us. How did this come about? Was it that we attended first to each other? We all attended to the common project of continuity of a 'story to live by' for a principal and teacher in a school at a time of principal transition. As time passed, we became more and more involved in thinking about the situation at the school. Our personal practical knowledge, our 'stories to live by,' embraced a way of learning from each other and from community. The similarity in outlook made it easier for us to get together. Much more time would typically be needed to bring together, in dialogue, people with vastly different points of view.

Section Four

Re-imagining Schools: A Work in Progress

A narrative appreciation of the complexity of the landscape of schools makes policies of school reform, either from within the school or from without the school, chancy at best. Complexity seems not to be appreciated. The multiple stories and continually changing circumstances have implications for school reform. Miller (1996) writes about "the pressure of providing public accountability and quick, visible evidence of improvement" (p. 86) in school reform efforts. My narrative inquiry leads me to believe that when there are policies to encourage controlled outcomes for practice in schools, participation is greatly reduced and there are few possibilities for authentic changes, changes authored by people at the school. There is more likely to be nominal participation–like a cover story. The reform literature for education is quite dismal when it comes to real change that lasts (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). It seems hopeless.

But I believe there *is* hope. Imagination is the gift we as human beings are endowed with that lets us hope. I would like to think about re-imagining rather than re-forming school. Rather than replacing one box with another, I would like to imagine teachers and a principal coming together to create a newly imagined school. I imagine teachers and a principal adapting and improvising theories and policies in the 'out of classroom place.' It is imagination that allows for multiple attending. I imagine teachers and a principal attending to the stories in their hearts and to the ideas they encounter on the landscape. Through encountering new ideas from others, through encountering new situations, our knowing widens and deepens. Through improvisation, we bring this knowing into our stories so we might continue to become, so schools might continue to become.

Clandinin and Connelly (1998) provide another slant. They say, "Careful narrative observing might allow noting the moments when possible new stories might bubble up" (p. 161). They write about possible "reform moments" (p. 161), like teachable moments in a school. My inquiry showed me the significance for Jeanette and Karin to attend to situations in multiple ways leading to improvisation. Improvisation creates new stories through the expression of a 'story to live by' within the context of the situation at hand. Stories encountered are not replaced. New stories are created. My inquiry leads me to imagine school reform as improvisatory works in progress.

I return to the anthropologist, Mary Catharine Bateson (1994) who talks about learning to live with multiple often contradictory visions, rather than replacing one with another. She says, "I believe that if we can learn a deeper noticing of the world around us, this will be the basis of effective concern" (p. 109).

But we do not notice what we are not a part of. Teachers have traditionally been told what to do. There has not been a history of involvement in the generation of theories and policies. In order to contribute with our whole selves, with our 'stories to live by' we need to have a 'place'. If there is no place, there is no story to make and there is no chance of continuing a 'story to live by' where the place might be.

Re-imagining Schools: A Gift of Grace

There is complexity in trying to build responsive community. My research shows me that on a school landscape we are walking in the midst of stories that speak of differing narrative histories amongst people, places and things, differing epistemological stances amongst people and stories of continual changes, small and large. Witherell (2000) writes of situations for which reconciliation seems impossible. She advocates not erasing differences but embracing both differences and commonality within a newly created story. She believes that creating a new story, rather than fixing or erasing the old one, is the only recourse. My inquiry shows creating a new story, one in which everyone feels included takes a long time.

My inquiry leads me to believe that allowing people who work in schools the opportunity to create a place of trust in the 'out of classroom place' is a gift of grace.

According to the Oxford dictionary, grace is linked with words such as concession, permission, mercy, unconstrained goodwill. The people who work in schools–teachers, children, principals, parents and others–need permission to engage in genuine dialogue in the 'out of classroom places,' to invite their 'stories to live by' and keep them present. They must attend to each other, attend first and foremost to what is in their hearts. They must feel safe enough to play, to improvise, to keep their 'stories to live by' present, to continue to create new stories. Goodwill is needed to allow for time, to allow for mistakes, to allow trust to be built. We hope not to make mistakes where we will hurt someone, but we need forgiveness if we do. A gift of grace is a gift to 'let.' Vinz (1996) hopes that in classrooms, teachers are able to "continue to focus on how to let the learning loose" (p. 283). I want to expand this notion to the out of classroom place of school.

To re-imagine school is to re-imagine a place. As revealed for me in my research, to create a story means to create a place of trust. A place of trust can be created in dialogue amongst us. In dialogue we attend to people. We let our 'stories to live by' reside in the dwelling place of our conversations. Karin was able to create a place of trust in her classroom as she learned about the children over time. She granted the children the opportunity to continue the building adventure story over a three month period during choice time each day. Karin let the children make mistakes. She let the children's 'stories to live by' be expressed, in multiple ways. Karin gave her children the gift of grace. Jeanette also gave her staff the gift of grace. She did not tell. She invited. The complexities revealed in the 'out of classroom place' meant that creating new stories of a school community took longer. There were 'pockets' of new stories here and there. However, Jeanette herself felt pressed for time, to show the school was changing, to show ever improving achievement amongst the children. Jeanette shared with me her image of being at the bottom of a deep well, trying to climb out (field note, February 5, 1999). I imagine Jeanette did not feel the presence of a gift of grace.

Jeanette, Karin and I also granted ourselves the possibility of creating a story of our three-way get-together meeting. Now I see that because we had similar epistemologies, similar ways of knowing the world, there perhaps was less complication. We granted each other a gift of grace as we agreed to embark on our research journey together. We allowed time for our relationship to develop and our trust grew as we learned to appreciate each other more fully. Jeanette, Karin and I, through our trusting relationship, created a place for our 'stories to live by' to be expressed in each other's presence. We created a new story, the research story together.

A gift of grace provides time for dialogue so trust can be built. I imagine gathering round, to build a unique story from our relationships to people, things and places. I conjure again the image of my quilt, patched out of lived experiences, and sewn together with the intertwining thread of conversation with each other. Each quilt created is unique, an improvisatory piece of art responsive to the particular creators. My image of the quilt created is one in which the quilt is never finished. The gift of grace allows time for 'getting back to it.' The gift of grace allows for continuation of improvisatory work. A creation story takes a long time and, as the native American writer Marmon Silko (1996) says, the story is never finished. Considering the complexities that exist on a school landscape, creating a story of school together may take a long time.

To re-imagine schools we need to continue to tell and live by our own stories. We need to share our passions, and compassion with one another in genuine dialogue. As we gather together in the 'out of classroom places' to commune with one another, we pass around a mirror and in the mirror we see reflected our own and other's thoughts and feelings. We are brought into awareness of ourselves and of each other. We awaken to see what we must do. It is my hope that we in education may move toward bestowment of a gift of grace, so we may continue, continue to get back to our work.

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APPENDIX A

Professional Knowledge Landscape Terms–(Clandinin and Connelly, 1995)

The professional knowledge landscape: The metaphor provides a way to contextualize teachers' knowledge. It lies at the interface of theory and practice in teachers' lives. It acknowledges the situation whereby teachers spend part of their time in classrooms with students and part of their time in professional places with others. The landscape is thus made up of people, things and events in relationship and is described as both an intellectual and moral place.

The in classroom place: This is for the most part a safe place, where teachers live their stories of practice, relatively free from scrutiny.

The out of classroom place: This is a place where professionals come together for meetings, staff meetings and professional development for example. It is a place that is typically filled with knowledge 'funneled' into the school system, other people's visions of what is right, to direct teachers' and children's classroom lives.

The conduit: Policy makers, senior administrators use various implementation strategies to push research findings, policy plans and improvement schemes down the conduit to the out of classroom place. It is the knowledge that teachers are often heard talking about as 'coming down the pipe' or 'coming from on high'.

The sacred story: The theory driven view of practice that is shared by practitioners, policy makers and theoreticians, that pervades the out of classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape and has the quality of a sacred story (Crites, 1971).

The secret story: Stories of teaching practice told in safe places, often to other teachers in other secret places.

The cover story: When teachers move from their own classrooms to out of classroom places they often tell cover stories, stories where they depict themselves as experts. The stories fit an acceptable range for the story of school being lived out in the out of classroom place. Cover stories allow teachers to maintain teaching stories (often secret) that may be marginalized in whatever current regime of school is presently pervading the out of classroom place.

APPENDIX B

Sample from chronicle: A palette of colours–Karin–Fall, 1998

Second career • shy in school • back to university • encouraged by family

Bringing her life to classroom • props crafted at home for class • love for art

Wants children to know who she is • holistic • reads book • real person

Family stories • importance of education • October 9 fn.

Learner • innovative • CG compute project

Integrated curriculum • theme approach • October 13 fn

Concern for situation for the children

Responsibility • twos to help ones

Children acknowledge her allergy to chalk

Choice time not free time • October 16 fn